



# Brittany

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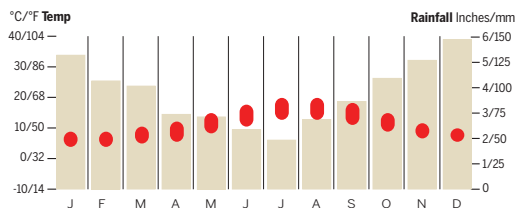
## Why Go?

Brittany is for explorers. Its wild, dramatic coastline, medieval towns and thick forests make an excursion here well worth the detour from the beaten track. This is a land of prehistoric mysticism, proud tradition and culinary wealth, where locals still remain fiercely independent, where Breton culture is celebrated and where Paris feels a very long way away indeed.

The entire region is wonderfully undiscovered once you go beyond its world-famous sights such as stunning St-Malo, regal Dinard and charming Dinan. Unexpected Breton gems – including the little-known towns of Roscoff, Quimper and Vannes, the megaliths of Carnac, the rugged coastlines of Finistère, the Presqu'île de Crozon and the Morbihan Coast – all quickly demonstrate that there's far more to Brittany than just delicious crêpes and homemade cider. Brittany's much-loved islands are also big draws – don't miss its two real stars, dramatic Île d'Ouessant and the very aptly named Belle Île.

## When to Go

### Brest



**June and early July** Enjoy the beaches, outdoor adventures and sunshine before the crowds.

**Late July** Head to Quimper for traditional Celtic music at the Festival de Cornouaille.

**Late November** In winter, join the crowds in Rennes for the Yaouank night festival.



## Brittany Highlights

- 1 Enjoy crêpes, cider and student life in the charming old town of **Rennes** (p272)
- 2 Tour the turreted medieval castle over the fairy-tale forest village of **Josselin** (p271)
- 3 Cycle past fields full of prehistoric **megaliths** (p266) around Carnac
- 4 Stroll along the **ramparts** (p235) at sunset for panoramic views over St-Malo
- 5 Explore the often overlooked Breton city of **Quimper** (p257), with its wonderful cathedral and old town
- 6 Sip Breton cider and learn about its production at the **Musée du Cidre** (p255) at Argol
- 7 Take in the relaxed Breton atmosphere and unusual church of **Roscoff** (p247), a charming port town
- 8 Hike around the barren coastline of the dramatic **Île d'Ouessant** (p254), home to some of Finistère's most appealing scenery

## History

Brittany's earliest known Neolithic tribes left a legacy of menhirs and dolmens that continue to baffle historians. Celts arrived in the 6th century BC, naming their new homeland Armor ('the land beside the sea'). The region was conquered by Julius Caesar in 56 BC. Following the withdrawal of the Romans in the 5th century AD, Celts driven from what is now Britain and Ireland by the Anglo-Saxon invasions settled in Brittany, bringing Christianity with them.

In the 9th century, Brittany's national hero Nominoë revolted against French rule. Wedged between two more-powerful kingdoms, the duchy of Brittany was continuously contested by France and England until a series of strategic royal weddings finally saw the region become part of France in 1532.

Brittany has retained a separate regional identity. Now there's a drive for cultural

and linguistic renewal, and a consciousness of Brittany's place within a wider Celtic culture embracing Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall and Galicia in Spain.

## i Getting There & Around

Ferries link St-Malo with the Channel Islands and the English ports of Portsmouth, Poole and Weymouth. From Roscoff there are ferries to Plymouth (UK) and Cork (Ireland). Alternatively, airports in Brest, Dinard, Lorient and, to the south, Nantes (p603) serve the UK and Ireland as well as other European and domestic destinations.

Brittany's major towns and cities have rail connections but routes leave the interior poorly served. The bus network is extensive, if generally infrequent, meaning that your own wheels are the best way to see the area, particularly out-of-the-way destinations.

With gently undulating, well-maintained roads, an absence of tolls and relatively little traffic outside the major towns, driving in Brittany is a

## GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING AROUND BRITTANY'S COASTLINE

CATHERINE LE NEVEZ

**Sillon de Talbert** Brittany's best coastal drives let you see long-standing traditions in action. West of Paimpol on the north coast, you may spot the local seaweed harvesters tossing strands of kelp into their carts.

**Côte de Granit Rose** The otter-inhabited coastline known as the Pink Granite Coast glows with pink granite cliffs, outcrops and boulders sculpted over the millennia by wind and waves. Their fiery colours are even more impressive when you're scaling them while following the 5km walking path, *sentier des douaniers* (custom officers' trail), just near the area's main town, the seaside resort of **Perros-Guirec**. Local fishermen sell their catch each morning at Perros' Marché des Pêcheurs on place du Marché. Offshore, head out on a boat trip to the **Sept-îles** (Seven Islands), home to more than 20,000 marine birds including puffins, razorbills and fulmars. Check out [www.armor-de-couve.fr](http://www.armor-de-couve.fr) for boat info.

**Pays Bigouden** If you're lucky enough to catch one of the cultural celebrations here in Finistère's southwestern corner, you might see women wearing the *coiffe bigoudène*, the area's traditional lace headdress that's up to 30cm tall. And if you're brave enough, you might want to join the hard-core surfers riding 'the lift' – a death-defying break off **Pointe de la Torche**. Near the car park, surf shops rent gear and offer advice; otherwise you can experience it vicariously listening to surfers recounting their survival at one of the point's cafés.

**Côte Sauvage** On the western edge of the peninsula en route to Quiberon, the aptly named 'wild coast' swoops between barren headlands and sheer cliffs. Bonus: you'll avoid the choked main-road traffic here – partly because the coast road (the D186a) isn't well signed. Heading south, turn off just before you reach St-Pierre-Quiberon, in the direction of Kemisob and Kervozès.

**Golfe du Morbihan** (Morbihan Coast) Most people visiting Morbihan's megaliths never make it to this part of the gulf. But swinging southwest from Vannes to **Port Navalo** rewards you with stupendous views over the gulf and its islands. Picnic benches perch at Port Navalo's tip – bring a hamper and a bottle of Breton cider.

real pleasure. Cycling is also extremely popular, and bike-rental places are never hard to find.

## NORTH COAST

Enveloped by belle époque beach resorts, fishing villages and curled headlands, Brittany's central north coast spans the *départements* of Ile-et-Vilaine and Côtes d'Armor. Green shallows give rise to the name Côte d'Émeraude (Emerald Coast) to the east; westwards, boulders blush along the Côte de Granit Rose.

### St-Malo

POP 50,200

The mast-filled port of St-Malo has a cinematically changing landscape. With one of the world's highest tidal ranges, brewing storms under blackened skies see waves lash over the top of the ramparts ringing

its walled city. Hours later, the blue sky merges with the deep marine-blue sea, exposing beaches as wide and flat as the clear skies above and creating land bridges to the granite outcrop islands.

Construction of the walled city's fortifications began in the 12th century. The town became a key port during the 17th and 18th centuries as a base for both merchant ships and government-sanctioned privateers (pirates, basically) against the constant threat of the English. These days English arrivals are tourists, for whom St-Malo, a short ferry hop from the Channel Islands, is a summer haven.

### Sights & Activities

#### INTRA MUROS

St-Malo's first inhabitants originally lived in St-Servan but later moved to this former island, which became linked to the mainland by the sandy isthmus of Le Sillon in the 13th century. For the best views of the

walled city, stroll along the top of the **ram-parts**, constructed at the end of the 17th century under military architect Vauban, and measuring 1.8km.

Though you'd never guess it from the cobblestone streets and reconstructed monuments in 17th- and 18th-century style, during August 1944 the battle to drive German forces out of St-Malo destroyed around 80% of the old city, lovingly restored since then.

### Cathédrale St-Vincent

CATHEDRAL

(Map p236; place Jean de Châtillon; ☎9.30am-6pm except during Mass) The town's cen-

trepièce was constructed between the 12th and 18th centuries, but damage during WWII was severe. A mosaic plaque on the floor of the nave marks the spot where Jacques Cartier received the blessing of the bishop of St-Malo before his 'voyage of discovery' to Canada in 1535. Cartier's tomb – all that remains of it post-1944 is his entombed head – is in a chapel on the north side of the choir.

### Musée du Château

CITY MUSEUM

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 71 57; adult/child €5/2.80; ☎10am-noon & 2-6pm, closed Mon Oct-Mar) Within the **Château de St-Malo**, built by the dukes of Brittany in the 15th and 16th centuries, is the Musée du Château, also known as the Musée d'Histoire de la Ville (city history museum). The museum's most interesting exhibits – the history of cod fishing on the Grand Banks and photos of St-Malo after WWII – are in the **Tour Générale**.

### La Maison de Corsaire

HISTORIC MANSION

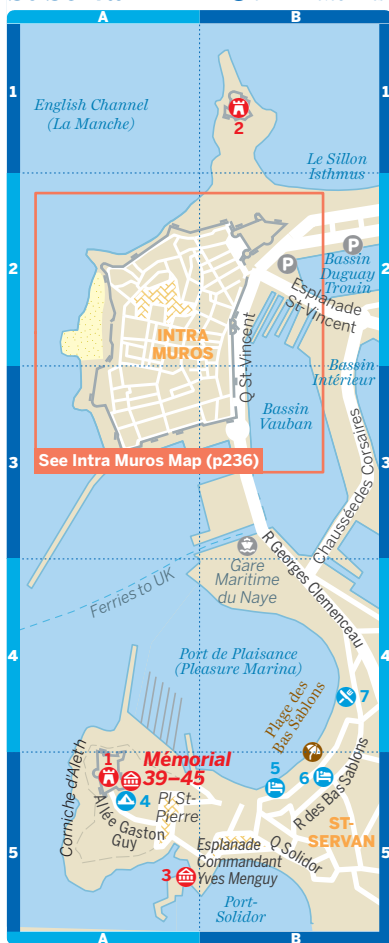
(Map p236; ☎02 99 56 09 40; www.demeure-de-corsaire.com; 5 rue d'Asfeld; adult/child €5.50/4; ☎10am-noon & 2-6pm, closed Mon in winter) You can visit this 18th-century mansion and historic monument, once owned by corsair (privateer) François Auguste Magon. Guided tours are in French; descriptions are available in English.

### ÎLE DU GRAND BÉ

At low tide, cross the beach to walk out via the Porte des Bés to the rocky islet of **île du Grand Bé** (www.petit-be.com, in French), where

## St-Malo & St-Servan

0 200 m  
0 0.08 miles



## St-Malo & St-Servan

### Top Sights

Mémorial 39–45.....A5

### Sights

- 1 Fort de la Cité.....A5
- 2 Fort National.....B1
- 3 Musée International du Long  
Cours Cap-Hornier .....A5

### Sleeping

- 4 Camping Aleth.....A5
- 5 Hôtel d'Aleth.....B5
- 6 Manoir du Cunningham .....B5

### Eating

- 7 Côté Jardin.....B4

### Drinking

- Le Cunningham.....(see 5)



the great St-Malo-born 18th-century writer Chateaubriand is buried. Once the tide rushes in, the causeway remains impassable for about six hours; check tide times with the tourist office. Depths can be deceptive; if you get caught out, stay on the islet until the tide subsides.

About 100m beyond the Île du Grand Bé is the Vauban-built 17th-century **Fort du Petit Bé** (☎06 08 27 51 20), also accessible at low tide.

## BEYOND THE WALLS

The pretty fishing port of St-Servan sits south of the walled city.

## Fort National

**Fort National** FORT  
(Map p235; [www.fortnational.com](http://www.fortnational.com); adult/child  
€5/3; ☺Easter & Jun-mid-Sep) The ramparts' northern stretch looks across to the remains of this former prison, built by Vauban in 1689. Standing atop a rocky outcrop, the fort can only be accessed at low tide.

Ask at the tourist office for times of tours during your stay.

## Mémorial 39–45

**Mémorial 39–45** MEMORIAL  
(Map p235; ☎02 99 82 41 74; adult/child  
€5.50/2.80; 🕒guided visits 2pm, 3.15pm &  
4.30pm Tue–Sun, daily Jul & Aug) Constructed  
in the mid-18th century, **Fort de la Cité**  
was used as a German base during WWII.  
One of the bunkers now houses the Mémorial  
39–45, which depicts St-Malo's violent  
WWII history and liberation, and includes  
a 45-minute film in French. Some guided  
visits are conducted in English; call ahead  
to confirm times.

**Musée International du Long Cours**  
**Cap-Hornier**

**Cape Hornier** MARITIME MUSEUM  
(Map p235; Museum of the Cape Horn Route; ☎02  
99 40 71 58; adult/child €6/2.80; ☀10am-noon  
& 2-6pm, closed Mon Oct-Mar) Housed in the  
14th-century **Tour Solidor**, this museum  
presents the life of the hardy sailors who  
followed the dangerous Cape Horn route

## Intra Muros



around the southern tip of South America. It also offers superb views from the top of the tower.

## Grand Aquarium

AQUARIUM

(☎02 99 21 19 00; www.aquarium-st-malo.com; av Général Patton; adult/child €15.50/10; ☎10am-6pm; ♿) Allow around two hours to see St-Malo's excellent aquarium. About 4km south of the city centre, it's a great wet-weather alternative for kids, with a minisubmarine descent and a *bassin tactile* (touch pool), where you can fondle rays, turbot – even a baby shark. Bus C1 from the train station passes by every half-hour.



## Activities

### Ferries & Boat Excursions Compagnie

**Corsaire** (☎08 25 13 80 35; www.compagnie-corsaire.com) can take you *pêche en mer* (deep-sea fishing) for about four hours (€39, Monday, Wednesday and Friday July and August), and runs ferries from just outside Porte de Dinan to the following: **Bay of St-Malo** (adult/child €19/11, 1½ hours), **Cancale/Pointe du Grouin** (adult/child €8/6.50, 2½ hours), **Dinan** (adult/child return €30/18, April to September), **Île Cézembre** (adult/child return €14/8.50, two to seven departures per week daily April to September) and **Îles Chausey** (adult/child return €30/18, two to five departures per week April to September).

**Vedettes de St-Malo** (☎02 23 18 02 04; www.vedettes-saint-malo.com) also runs boat excursions.



## Courses

To learn how to windsurf (lessons from €35 for one hour) or sail a catamaran (lessons from €50 for one hour), contact **Surf School** (☎02 99 40 07 47; www.surfschool.org, in French).



## Sleeping

St-Malo has plenty of hotels, but accommodation books up quickly in summer – the tourist office website has continuous updates of availability. For *chambres d'hôte* (B&Bs), try the nearby towns of Cancale, Dinan and their surrounds.

## INTRAMUROS

### Hôtel San Pedro

HOTEL €

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 88 57; www.sanpedro-hotel.com; 1 rue Ste-Anne; s €52-54, d €63-73; ♿) Tucked away at the back of the old city, the San Pedro has cool, crisp, neutral-toned decor with subtle splashes of colour, friendly service and superb sea views. Breakfast is an €8 feast.

### Hôtel de l'Univers

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 89 52; www.hotel-univers-saintmalo.com; pl Chateaubriand; s/d/tr €77/89/103; ♿) Right by the most frequently used gateway to the old city (Porte St-Vincent), this cream-coloured place with 63 rooms is perfectly poised for all of St-Malo's attractions. Rooms are compact, in dark tones and with crisp linens. The whole place has a very club-like country



## MONUMENT COMBO

A **combined ticket** (€13/6.50 per adult/child) gives you access to St-Malo's three major monuments: the Musée du Château, Musée International du Long Cours Cap-Hornier and Mémorial 39–45. It can be purchased at any of the three participating museums and is valid for the duration of your stay in St-Malo.

## Intra Muros

### 📍 Top Sights

Cathédrale St-Vincent..... C2

### 📍 Sights

- 1 Château de St-Malo..... D1
- 2 La Maison de Corsaire ..... C3
- 3 Musée du Château..... C1

### 🛏 Sleeping

- 4 Hôtel de l'Univers ..... C1
- 5 Hôtel les Chiens du Guet..... B3
- 6 Hôtel San Pedro..... B2

### 🍴 Eating

- 7 Café Licorne ..... C1
- 8 Crêperie Margaux ..... C3
- 9 Halle au Blé ..... C3
- 10 La Bouche en Folie..... B2
- 11 La Maison du Beurre..... C3
- 12 Le Chalut..... C2
- 13 Restaurant Delaunay ..... C2

### 🍷 Drinking

- 14 L'Alchimiste ..... C1
- 15 L'Aviso..... B3

hotel feel, especially in the all-wood maritime bar.

### Hôtel les Chiens du Guet

HOTEL €

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 87 29; 4 place du Guet; r €52-57, tw €63-68; ☎) A narrow stone staircase next to this welcoming hotel pops you directly up on top of the ramparts; adjacent Porte St-Pierre opens directly to the beach. The 12 simple, sunlit rooms are homey if somewhat snug. There's a convivial on-site restaurant; *menus* start at €9.50.

## BEYOND THE WALLS

### Manoir du Cunningham

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €€

(Map p235; ☎02 99 21 33 33; www.st-malo-hotel-cunningham.com; 9 place Monseigneur Duchesne; r €110-190; ☎) The rather Disneyesque exterior of this hotel belies its very pleasant interior, a 13-room, mahogany-rich guesthouse a stroll from the ferry, with views out to sea. A great spot to be comfortable away from the crowds.

### Brit Hôtel Le Surcouf

FAMILY HOTEL €

(☎02 99 56 30 19; www.surcoufhotel.com; 17 rue du Révérend Père Umbricht; s €45-75, d €55-75; ☎) In a peaceful residential quarter 1km from the walled town and five minutes' walk from the beach, this charming and friendly hotel is ideal if you're driving, with free street parking out front. The classy aubergine-toned rooms are spacious, immaculate and contemporary. Breakfast (€7.50) is also superb.

### Hôtel d'Aleth

HOTEL €

(Map p235; ☎02 99 81 48 08; www.st-malo-hotel-cunningham.com; 2 rue des Hauts Sablons;

r €50-65; ☎) Just a short stumble upstairs from the nautical pub, Le Cunningham, it's well worth paying a few extra euros for a sea view. Light sleepers beware: it's noisy to say the least. Frills are few: no lift, no in-room phones and no reception desk – check in at Manoir du Cunningham, a short walk up the road. The free wireless is very limited and can only be picked up in certain rooms.

### Auberge de Jeunesse Éthic Étapes

HOSTEL €

(☎02 99 40 29 80; www.centrevarangot.com; 37 av du Père Umbricht; dm incl breakfast €17.50-20; ☎) This efficient place has a self-catering kitchen (and supermarket two minutes' walk away) as well as free sports facilities. Take bus C1 from the train station.

### Camping Aleth

CAMPGROUND €

(Map p235; ☎06 78 96 10 62; www.camping-aleth.com; allée Gaston Buy; tent/caravan per 2 people €13.50/18; ☎May-Sep) Perched on top of a peninsula next to Fort de la Cité, Camping Aleth (also spelt Alet) has panoramic 360-degree views and is close to beaches. It's also close but not *too* close to some lively bars.



## Eating

Browse the menus of the plethora of restaurants between Porte St-Vincent, the cathedral and the Grande Porte.

### Le Chalut

SEAFOOD €€

(Map p236; ☎02 99 56 71 58; 8 rue de la Corne de Cerf; menus €25-68; ☎Wed-Sun) This unremarkable-looking establishment is in fact St-Malo's most celebrated restaurant and a must for any self-respecting seafood lover. The kitchen overflows with the best the Breton coastline has to offer – buttered turbot, line-caught sea bass and scallops in Champagne sauce. Reservations for dinner are advised.

### La Bouche en Folie

MODERN FRENCH €

(Map p236; ☎06 72 49 08 89; 14 rue du Boyer; menus €13-29; ☎closed Mon & Tue) Hidden away from the tourist trail, this sleek joint oozes Gallic gorgeousness from every nook and cranny. The menu gives a modern spin to French staples – lamb is fricasséed with garlic and artichokes, while monkfish is partnered by peas, black olives and asparagus. Sumptuous.



### Restaurant Delaunay

GASTRONOMIC €€

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 92 46; www.restaurant-delaunay.com; 6 rue Ste-Barbe; menus €28-65;

## ST-MALO & ST-SERVAN BEACHES

You can splash in the protected tidal pool west of the city walls at **Plage de Bon Secours** (Map p236) or climb its ladder to jump off into the sea.

St-Servan's **Plage des Bas Sablons** (Map p235) has a cement wall to keep the sea from receding completely at low tide.

The much larger **Grande Plage** stretches northeast along the isthmus of Le Sillon. Spectacular sunsets can be seen along the stretch from Grande Plage to Plage des Bas Sablons. Less-crowded **Plage de Rochebonne** is another 1km to the northeast.

☺dinner Mon-Sat, closed Mon in winter) This superb yet unassuming-looking restaurant is where Chef Didier Delaunay creates stand-out gastronomic cuisine within aubergine-painted walls. The menu features succulent dishes both from the surf (Breton lobster is a speciality) and turf (tender lamb). The restaurant is fully wheelchair accessible.

### Crêperie Margaux

CRÊPERIE €

(Map p236; ☎02 99 20 26 02; www.creperie-margaux.com; 3 place du Marché aux Légumes; crêpes €2.50-10; ☺closed Tue & Wed, open daily Jul-Aug) Watch the owner of this wonderful little crêperie on violet-filled Marché aux Légumes making traditional crêpes by hand (her motto: 'if you're in a hurry, don't come here'). The aromas wafting through the timber-lined dining room, and the scads of happy diners, prove it's well worth the wait.

### Côté Jardin

BRETON CUISINE €

(Map p235; ☎02 99 81 63 11; 36 rue Dauphine, St-Servan; menus €13-33; ☺lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Tue & Thu-Sun) The charming, friendly Côté Jardin presents regional and traditional French cuisine, with a scenic terrace overlooking the marina and St-Malo's walled city. Doodlers can draw on the table with coloured pencils provided.

### Café Licorne

BISTRO €

(Map p236; ☎02 99 40 05 18; www.cafe-licorne.com; 6 place Chateaubriand; mains €2.80-15; ☺8am-11pm) This popular and relatively good-value place for a sit-down lunch within the walls has a buzzing terrace and a funky feel. Crêpes, omelettes, salads, a decent club sandwich and fresh *moules* (mussels) dominate the menu.

### Self-Catering

Cheeses and butters handmade by Jean-Yves Bordier's **La Maison du Beurre** (Map p236; 9 rue de l'Orme; ☺Tue-Sat, closed Wed afternoon) are shipped to famous restaurants all over the world. Just down the street is the covered market, **Halle au Blé** (Map p236; rue de la Herse; ☺8am-noon Tue & Fri).



### Drinking

#### L'Alchimiste

BAR

(Map p236; 7 rue St-Thomas; ☺5pm-2am, closed Mon Oct-Apr) Ben Harper-type music creates a mellow backdrop at this magical place filled with old books and a toy flying fox. Take a seat at the bar draped with a red tasseled theatre curtain, on the carved timber

mezzanine (including a pulpit), or in the wood-heated basement.

#### L'Aviso

LIVE MUSIC BAR

(Map p236; 12 rue Point du Jour; ☺6pm-3am) Regular live music features at this cosy place, which has more than 300 beers on offer (and over 10 – including Breton beer – on tap). If you can't decide, ask the friendly owner/connoisseur.

#### Le Cunningham

BAR

(Map p235; 2 rue des Hauts Sablons; ☺6pm-3am Tue-Sat, to 2am Sun) Sail away at this curved wood bar with a wall of timber-framed windows looking out over water. Year-round live entertainment includes jazz, soul and Brazilian beats.



### Entertainment

In summer, classical music concerts are held in Cathédrale St-Vincent and elsewhere in the city, and the pubs, bars and cafés have lots of live music – check the 'what's on' section of the tourist office's website (www.saint-malo-tourisme.com).



### Information

**Main post office** (1 bd de la République) Outside the walls.

**Mokamalo** (5 rue de l'Orme; ☺9am-8pm) Internet access inside the walls.

**Post office** (place des Frères Lamennais) Inside the walls.

**Tourist office** (☎08 25 13 52 00, 02 99 56 64 43; www.saint-malo-tourisme.com; esplanade St-Vincent; ☺9am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Just outside the walls.



### Getting There & Away

**AIR** See p268 for flight details.

**BOAT Brittany Ferries** (☎reservations in France 08 25 82 88 28, in UK 0871 244 0744; www.brittany-ferries.com) sails between St-Malo and Portsmouth, and **Condor Ferries** (☎in France 08 25 16 54 63, in UK 01202 207 216; www.condorferries.co.uk) runs to/from Poole and Weymouth via Jersey or Guernsey. Car ferries leave from the Gare Maritime du Nar.

From April to September, **Compagnie Corsaire** (☎08 25 13 80 35; www.compagniecorsaire.com) and **Vedettes de St-Malo** (☎02 23 18 41 08; www.vedettes-saint-malo.com) run a **Bus de Mer** (Sea Bus; adult/child return €7/4.30) shuttle service (10 minutes, at least hourly) between St-Malo and Dinard.

**BUS** All intercity buses stop by the train station. **Keolis Emeraude** (☎02 99 19 70 80; www.keolis-emeraude.com) has services to Cancale

## COUNTING THE BEAT

Celtic culture is synonymous with music, and Brittany is no exception. Its wealth of indoor and outdoor festivals and concerts feature traditional instruments through to electronica (and everything in between), including big-name international acts. Keep your finger on the pulse by picking up the free monthly zine **Ty Zicos** ([www.tyzicos.com](http://www.tyzicos.com), in French) in cafés and bars.

In addition to the festivals and events listed throughout this chapter, tune in to the region's top musical trio each year.

**Les Vieilles Charrues de Carhaix** ([www.vieillescharrues.asso.fr](http://www.vieillescharrues.asso.fr)) Old-school crooners, electronic beats and much more attract crowds of 300,000-plus to Carhaix in mid-July.

**Astropolis** ([www.astropolis.org](http://www.astropolis.org), in French) Brest's electronic music fest in early August, with the main event atmospherically set in a castle.

**Les Transmusicales de Rennes** ([www.lestrans.com](http://www.lestrans.com)) Groundbreaking indie bands in Rennes, in early December.

(€2, 30 minutes) and Mont St-Michel (€3.30, 1½ hours, three to four daily). **Illeleno** (☎02 99 82 26 26; [www.illenoo-services.fr](http://www.illenoo-services.fr)) services run to Dinard (€1.70, 30 minutes, hourly) and Rennes (€3, one to 1½ hours, three to six daily). **Tibus** (☎08 10 22 22 22; [www.tibus.fr](http://www.tibus.fr)) buses go to Dinard (€2, 50 minutes, three to eight daily).

**CAR Avis** (☎02 99 40 18 54) and **Europcar** (☎02 99 56 75 17) have offices at the train station. Avis also has a desk at the Gare Maritime du Naye.

**TRAIN** TGV trains run from St-Malo:

**Dinard** €9, one hour, 10 daily (requiring a change in Dol de Bretagne)

**Paris Montparnasse** €63, three hours, up to 10 daily

**Rennes** €13, one hour, roughly hourly

## i Getting Around

**BUS** St-Malo city buses (single journey €1.05, 24-hour pass €3) operate until about 8pm, with some lines extending until around midnight in summer. Between esplanade St-Vincent and the train station, take buses C1 or C2.

**TAXI** Call ☎02 99 81 30 30.

## Dinard

POP 11,180

Visiting Dinard 'in season' is a little like stepping into one of the canvases Picasso painted here in the 1920s. Belle époque mansions built into the cliffs form a timeless backdrop to the beach dotted with blue-and-white striped bathing tents and the beachside carnival. Out of season, when holidaymakers have packed up their buckets and spades, the town is decidedly dor-

mant, but wintry walks along the coastal paths are spectacular.

## 👁 Sights & Activities

### Scenic Walks

WALKS

The romantically named **promenade du Clair de Lune** (moonlight promenade) has views across the Rance River estuary to St-Malo's walled city, and nightly sound-and-light spectacles in summer.

Two-hour **guided walks** (🕒2.30pm) explaining the town's history, art and architecture in English and French depart from the tourist office.

Beautiful **seaside trails** extend along the coast in both directions. Walkers can follow the shoreline from Plage du Prieuré to Plage de St-Énogat via Pointe du Moulinet, while cyclists can shadow the coastline on the road. Pack the Institut National Géographique (IGN) 1:50,000 map *Ille-et-Vilaine: Randonnées en Haute Bretagne*, which highlights walking trails throughout the *département*.

### Barrage de la Rance

BRIDGE

This 750m bridge over the Rance estuary carries the D168 between St-Malo and Dinard, lopping a good 30km off the journey. A feat of hydroelectricity, the **Usine Marémotrice de la Rance** (below the bridge) generates electricity by harnessing the lower estuary's extraordinarily high tidal range – a difference of 13.5m between high and low tide.

**FREE Espace Découverte** (🕒10am-6pm May-Sep), on the Dinard bank, is good for the mechanically minded. It illustrates the power station's construction

and environmental impact, with a film in English.

## Beaches & Swimming

BEACHES

Framed by fashionable hotels, a casino and neo-Gothic villas, **Plage de l'Écluse** is the perfect place to shade yourself in style by renting one of Dinard's trademark blue-and-white striped **bathing tents** (€02 99 46 18 12; per half-day €7.50-12, per day €8.50-15.50); you can also hire parasols and deck-chairs. Reproductions of Picasso's paintings are often planted in the sand here in high summer.

Filled with heated seawater, the Olympic-sized indoor pool **Piscine Municipale** (€02 99 46 22 77; promenade des Alliés; adult/child €4.50/3.50) is beside the beach.

Less chic (and less crowded) than the Plage de l'Écluse is **Plage du Prieuré**, 1km to the south. **Plage de St-Énogat** is 1km west of Plage de l'Écluse, on the far side of Pointe de la Malouine.

## Water Sports

WATER SPORTS

At Plage de l'Écluse, **Wishbone Club** (€02 99 88 15 20; [www.wishbone-club-dinard.com](http://www.wishbone-club-dinard.com); ☉9am-9pm Jun-Sep) rents out windsurfing boards from €15 per hour, and can arrange lessons. The company also organises catamarans and kayak rental.

Dive trips are run by **CSD** (Club Subaquatique Dinardais; €02 99 46 25 18; from €18).

## Sleeping

Dinard's prices match its cachet: budget travellers may want to consider staying in St-Malo and catching the ferry or strolling across.



### Hôtel Printania

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(€02 99 46 13 07; [www.printaniahotel.com](http://www.printaniahotel.com), in French; 5 av George V; s €67, d €73-104; ☉mid-Mar-mid-Nov; ☹) This is a charming Breton-style hotel, complete with wood-and-leather furniture, which has a superb location overlooking the Baie du Prieuré. Guest rooms with a sea view cost more; otherwise get your fill of the grand views across the water to St-Servan at breakfast (€8.50). There's an annexe of the hotel on the road that you may come to before you get to the main building – there's no reception here, so keep on going until you see the hotel proper.

### Grand Hôtel Barrière

LUXURY HOTEL €€

(€02 99 88 26 26; [www.lucienbarriere.com](http://www.lucienbarriere.com); 3 bd Féart; s €165-200, d €180-300; ☹☹☹☹☹) Dinard's most fabulous address is this

old-timer that has been given a very smart facelift and has prices to match. The rooms are spacious, many with balconies and magnificent sea views, though the style is very much anonymous chic. There's a large swimming pool (covered most of the year) and a glamorous lawn area for taking an evening cocktail. Wireless access is charged.

### Hôtel de la Plage

HOTEL €

(€02 99 46 14 87; [www.hoteldelaplage-dinard.com](http://www.hoteldelaplage-dinard.com); 3 bd Féart; s €55-75, d €69-125; ☹) Refreshingly unpretentious, with warm staff and solid stone-walled rooms renovated with red-and-gold furnishings and heavy timber furniture, including sleigh beds. A handful of the 18 rooms here have huge timber decks looking out to the sea, a few footsteps away.

### Camping Municipal du Port Blanc

CAMPGROUND €

(€02 99 46 10 74; [camping.municipal@ville-dinard.fr](mailto:camping.municipal@ville-dinard.fr); rue du Sergeant Boulanger; site per 2 adults from €19; ☉Apr-Sep) You'll find this campground close to the beach, about 2km west of Plage de l'Écluse. There are some excellent views and direct access to the sand.



## Eating

Some of Dinard's best restaurants are attached to hotels, such as **Hôtel Printania** (menus €25-38), which serves top-notch fish and seafood.

### Chez Ma Pomme

BRETON CUISINE €€

(€02 99 46 81 90; 6 rue Yves Verney; menus €20-26; ☉closed Mon, dinner Sun & Thu Sep-Jun) Codfish roasted in bacon and parmesan is among the innovative twists on local ocean-caught fish, while rich Breton caramel features in the tempting array of desserts. The team in the kitchen is hip and young, and the colourful interior equally bright.

### L'Abri des Flots

SEAFOOD €€

(€02 99 16 99 48; 3 place de la République; lunch/dinner menus €23-35) Effortlessly chic, this modern temple to seafood does not disappoint. Its cavernous interior is usually filled to capacity every day when the morning's catch is lovingly transformed into classic French dishes. Highly recommended.

### Crêperie Côté Mer

CRÊPERIE €

(€02 99 16 80 30; 29 bd Wilson; menus from €12.50; ☉closed Mon Sep-Jun) A crisp little crêperie with pine tables on a pretty pedestrianised street, the Côté Mer serves grilled



meat, salads, oysters and *moules frites* (mussels and fries) as well as (naturally) crêpes, galettes and ice cream year-round.

### Self-Catering

Beach-picnic supplies abound at Dinard's large **covered market** (place Rochaid; ☎7am-1.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat).

## i Information

**Cyberspot** (6 rue Winston Churchill; per hr €6; ☎10am-7pm Wed-Sat, 2.30-7pm Sun & Mon)

**Tourist office** (☎02 99 46 94 12; www.ot-dinard.com; 2 bd Féart; ☎9.30am-12.15pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat) Staff book accommodation for free.

## i Getting There & Away

**AIR Ryanair** (www.ryanair.com) has daily flights to and from London Stansted. There's no public transport from Dinard airport (5km from Dinard) to town (or to neighbouring St-Malo); a daytime/evening taxi from Dinard to the airport costs around €15/22.

**BOAT** From April to September, **Compagnie Corsaire** (☎08 25 13 80 35; www.compagnie-corsaire.com) and **Vedettes de St-Malo** (☎02 23 18 41 08; www.vedettes-saint-malo.com) run a **Bus de Mer** (Sea Bus; adult/child return €7/4.30) shuttle service (10 minutes) between St-Malo and Dinard, operating at least hourly.

**BUS Illenoo** (www.illenoo-services.fr) buses connect Dinard and the train station in St-Malo (€1.70, 30 minutes, hourly). Le Gallic bus stop, outside the tourist office, is the most convenient. Several buses travel to Rennes (€3.90, two hours).

## i Getting Around

**BICYCLE** To nip around you can hire bicycles (from €9 per day) and motor scooters (from €38 per day) from **Breiz Cycles** (☎02 99 46 27 25; 8 rue St-Éogat).

**TAXI** Call ☎06 64 98 59 59.

## Cancale

POP 5440

The idyllic little fishing port of Cancale, 14km east of St-Malo, is famed for its off-shore *parcs à huîtres* (oyster beds).

## 👁 Sights

### Ferme Marine

OYSTER MUSEUM

(Marine Farm; www.ferme-marine.com; corniche de l'Aurore; adult/child €7/3.60; ☎mid-Feb-Oct) This small museum dedicated to oyster farming and shellfish runs guided tours in

English at 2pm from July to mid-September.

## 🛏 Sleeping & Eating

It's an easy day trip to Cancale from St-Malo or Dinard, but there are some appealing places if you want to spend the night.

### La Pastourelle

B&B €

(☎02 99 89 10 09; www.baie-saintmichel.com, in French; Les Nuelles, St-Méloir des Ondes; s €56-64, d €62-74; ☎) The countryside around Cancale shelters some really lovely *chambres d'hôte* (ask the tourist office for a complete list). One of the most delightful is this vine-covered traditional Breton *longère* (long house) looking out to sea. Rooms are crisp and countrified, and convivial *tables d'hôte* (€27 per person) are available by reservation. It's on the D155.

### Hôtel La Mère Champlain

HOTEL €

(☎02 99 89 60 04; www.lamerechamplain.com; 1 quai Thomas; d €69-149; ☎) Reached by a newly installed lift (making it wheelchair accessible), the 15 delightfully renovated rooms at this quayside hotel have a relaxed ambience and pretty-as-a-picture port views. The nautical-style restaurant (*menus* €16 to €40), complete with crisp linen, specialises in grilled lobster and has amazing desserts.

### Le Continental

HOTEL €€

(☎02 99 89 60 16; www.hotel-cancale.com, in French; 4 quai Thomas; d €88-148; ☎mid-Feb-early Jan; ☎) Above its portside, red-awning-shaded restaurant (*menus* €19 to €42), this *hôtel de charme* with good wheelchair access has beautiful timber-rich rooms. Sea-facing rooms are at a premium but the views, especially on the higher floors, are worth it.

### Auberge de Jeunesse

HOSTEL €

(☎02 99 89 62 62; www.fuaj.org; Port Pican; dm from €19; ☎Feb-Nov) Right by the seaside, Cancale's HI-affiliated youth hostel at Port Pican is 3km northeast of the town – take the bus (July and August only) to the Cancale Église or Port Pican stop and walk 500m towards the seafront. Campers can pitch up here for €6 per night.

### Camping Municipal Le Grouin

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 99 89 63 79; Pointe du Grouin; site €15; ☎Mar-Oct) Overlooking a fine-sand beach 6km north of Cancale near Pointe du Grouin, this place has 200 well-spaced sites, and facilities for wheelchairs.



## BRETON LANGUAGE REDUX

Throughout Brittany you'll see bilingual Breton street and transport signs, and many other occurrences of the language popping up. Even though all Breton speakers also speak French, this is seen as an important gesture to normalising the use of a language that has been stigmatised and even banned throughout much of the early and mid-20th century.

Historically speaking, Breton is a Celtic language related to Cornish and Welsh, and more distantly to Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Following on from the French Revolution, the government banned the teaching of Breton in schools, punishing children who spoke their mother tongue. As happened with other marginalised Celtic cultures, speakers of all ages were stigmatised. For the next century and a half it remained a language spoken in the sanctum of private homes. Education, post-WWII economics, mass media and, most of all, fluid transportation between Brittany and the rest of the country also saw French rapidly gain ground. Between 1950 and 1990 there was an 80% reduction in Breton usage.

But what constitutes 'Breton' these days is trickier to pin down. The seeds of the language's revival were planted in the 1960s, particularly after France's May 1968 protests, driven by the younger generation rebelling against their oppressed cultural heritage. Bringing about the rebirth of the language, no longer passed on generationally, wasn't straightforward. More often spoken than written (and both spoken and written with regional differences), settling on a standardised Breton for teaching in schools is still complex.

There's also a distinct difference between the Breton of first-generation speakers and 'neo-Breton', particularly as the new incarnation often replaces French words long intermingled with Breton with completely Breton ones. Case in point: *Aotrou* and *Itron* are now used for the French *Monsieur* and *Madame*. Traditionally, though, they denote someone of exceedingly high rank (*Itron* is the respectful term of address for the Virgin Mary) – creating another generational language gap. (Bizarrely, it would be like being greeted by a stranger, without irony, as, 'Hello, Exalted One.') Some older Breton speakers also find it hard to shake the ostracism inflicted on them for their language, and aren't comfortable conversing in it openly.

Breton now also extends beyond its historic boundaries. Originally, Basse Bretagne (Lower Brittany, in the west) spoke variants of the Breton language, while Haute Bretagne (Upper Brittany, in the east, including areas such as St-Malo) spoke Gallo, a language similar to French. But today you'll find Breton signage in Rennes' metro stations and in many other parts of the east, emblemising Brittany's culture across the entire region.

When today's students integrate their school-taught Breton into society, Breton will evolve yet again, just as France's mosaic of cultures also continues to evolve. For now as the language regenerates, so does the sense of Breton identity.

### Marché aux Huîtres

OYSTER MARKET €

(☉9am-6pm) Clustered by the Pointe des Crolles lighthouse, stalls sell oysters from €3.50 per dozen for small *huîtres creuses* to upwards of €20 for saucer-sized *plates de Cancale*.



### Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 99 89 63 72; [www.cancale-tourisme.fr](http://www.cancale-tourisme.fr); ☉9am-1pm & 2.30-6pm) At the top of rue du Port. In July and August there's an annexe in the wooden house where the fish auction takes place on quai Gambetta.



### Getting There & Around

**BICYCLE** A variety of bikes can be hired at **Les 2 Roues de Cancale** (☎02 99 89 80 16; 7 rue de L'Industrie; per day from €13). It's a stunning 35km ride or walk along the coast from Cancale to St-Malo.

**BUS** Buses stop behind the church on place Lucidas and at Port de la Houle, next to the pungent fish market. **Keolis Emeraude** ([www.keolis-emeraude.com](http://www.keolis-emeraude.com)) has year-round services to and from St-Malo (€2, 30 minutes). In summer, at least three daily Keolis Emeraude buses continue to Port Pican and Port Mer, near Pointe du Grouin.

## Pointe du Grouin

At the northern tip of the wild coast between Cancale and St-Malo, this **nature reserve** juts out on a windblown headland. Just east offshore, **île des Landes** is home to a colony of giant black cormorants whose wingspans can reach 170cm.

Via the GR34 **coastal hiking trail**, Pointe du Grouin is a stunning 7km hike from Cancale and 28km from St-Malo. By the D201 road, it's 4km from Cancale. Cancale tourist office's free map covers the local coastline.

## Dinan

POP 11,600

Set high above the fast-flowing River Rance, the narrow cobblestone streets and squares lined with crooked half-timbered houses making up Dinan's old town are straight out of the Middle Ages – something that's not lost on the deluge of summer tourists.

### Sights

#### Tour de l'Horloge

TOWER

(☎02 96 87 02 26; rue de l'Horloge; adult/child €2.95/1.90; ☉10am-6.30pm Jun-Sep) The half-timbered houses overhanging place des Cordeliers and place des Merciers mark the heart of the old town. A few paces south, climb up to the little balcony of this 15th-century clock tower whose chimes ring every quarter hour.

#### Basilique St-Sauveur

CHURCH

(place St-Sauveur; ☉9am-6pm) With its soaring Gothic chancel, the Basilique St-Sauveur contains a 14th-century grave slab in its north transept reputed to contain the heart of **Bertrand du Guesclin**, a 14th-century knight noted for his hatred of the English and his fierce battles to ex-

pel them. Ironically, Dinan today has one of the largest English expat communities in Brittany!

#### Château de Dinan

TEXTILE MUSEUM

(☎02 96 39 45 20; rue du Château; adult/child €4.40/1.75; ☉10am-6.30pm, closed Jan) The town's museum is atmospherically housed in the keep of Dinan's ruined 14th-century château. It showcases the town's textile industry, with a fine collection of *coiffes* (traditional Breton lace headdresses).

Just east of the church, beyond the tiny **Jardin Anglais** (English Garden), a former cemetery and nowadays a pleasant little park, is the 13th-century **Tour Ste-Catherine**, with great views down over the viaduct and port.

#### Vieux Pont

HISTORIC QUARTER

**Rue du Jerzual** and its continuation, the steep (and slippery when wet) stone **rue du Petit Fort**, both lined with art galleries, antiques shops and restaurants, lead down to the **Vieux Pont** (Old Bridge). From here the little port extends northwards, while the 19th-century **Viaduc de Dinan** soars high above to the south.



### Activities

#### Compagnie Corsaire

BOAT TRIPS

(www.compagniecorsaire.com) Between May and September, boats sail along the River Rance to Dinard and St-Malo (return trip €30, 2½ hours). Sailing schedules vary according to the tides. From Dinard or St-Malo you can easily return to Dinan by bus (and, from St-Malo, by train too).

#### Self-Guided Walks

WALKS

Ask at the tourist office for its free leaflet *Discovery Tours*, available in several languages including English, which plots three walking itineraries around town.

### DON'T MISS

## LE COQUILLAGE

Super chef Olivier Roellinger's latest project is his sumptuous restaurant **Le Coquillage** (☎02 99 89 64 76; www.maisons-de-bricourt.com; 1 rue Duguesclin; menus €26-90; ☉closed Jan & Feb) and hotel housed in the extremely impressive Château Richeux, 4km to the south of Cancale. Roellinger's creations have earned him three Michelin stars and you won't have trouble seeing why if you're lucky enough to get a table here. The Maritime Adventure *menu* (€90) takes in many culinary highlights of both Brittany and Normandy, from fresh scallops to the region's dishes, all beautifully cooked and imaginatively served. Booking well ahead is essential. As well as offering rooms at Château Richeux, Roellinger offers a range of cottages and other deluxe accommodation around Cancale. See the website for details.



## Festivals & Events

### Festival des Remparts

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

(www.fete-remparts-dinan.com) No fewer than 100,000 visitors turn up to join Dinannais townsfolk dressed in medieval garb for the two-day Fête des Remparts, held every even-numbered year in late July.



### Sleeping

In summer, advance reservations are recommended. Ask the tourist office for a list of *chambres d'hôte* in the surrounding area.

### La Villa Côté Cour

B&B €€

(☎02 96 39 30 07; www.villa-cote-cour-dinan.com; 10 rue Lord Kitchener; s €89-159, d incl breakfast €99-229; ☎) Live the dream... opening onto a delightful garden, this exquisite *chambre d'hôte* has just four countrified rooms with checked fabrics, scrubbed floorboards and a decadent sauna (€9.50). Many rooms also have their own jacuzzis.

### Hôtel de la Tour de l'Horloge

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(☎02 96 39 96 92; www.hotel-dinan.com; 5 rue de la Chaux; s/d €55/69; ☎) In the centre of the old town, the 12-room Horloge occupies a charming 18th-century house on a cobbled, car-free lane, which contrasts with its brand-new renovations in colourful North African style. Head to the top floor, where rooms have exposed wooden beams and a lofty view of the hotel's namesake clock tower.

### Hôtel Les Grandes Tours

HISTORIC HOTEL €

(☎02 96 85 16 20; www.hotel-dinan-grandes-tours.com; 6 rue du Château; s €40-56, d €40-60, tr €73; ☎Feb-mid-Dec; ☎) In its former life as the Hôtel des Messageries, this hotel was famed as the place Victor Hugo stayed with his very good friend Juliette Drouet in 1836. Blue-shaded rooms (especially those on the sloped-ceilinged top floor) are snug but conducive to snuggling up, and there's lock-up parking (€8).

### Auberge de Jeunesse Moulin de Méen

HOSTEL €

(☎02 96 39 10 83; www.fuaj.org; Vallée de la Fontaine des Eaux; camping €6, dm incl breakfast €13.50; ☎closed late Dec-early Feb; ☎) Dinan's HI-affiliated youth hostel is in a lovely vine-covered old water mill about 750m north of the port. Reception is open 9am to noon and 5pm to 9pm.

## Camping Municipal Châteaubriand

CAMPGROUND €

245

(☎in summer 02 96 39 11 96, rest of yr 02 96 39 22 43; 103 rue Châteaubriand; per adult/tent/car €2.70/3/2.50; ☎late May-late Sep) This campground at the foot of the ramparts is the closest to the old town.



### Eating & Drinking

The old city has some really charming (and surprisingly good-value) eateries and bars, with more along the river at the old port.

### Le Cantorbery

TRADITIONAL FRENCH €€

(☎02 96 39 02 52; 6 rue Ste-Claire; menus €26-37; ☎closed Wed) Occupying a magnificent 17th-century house, this elegant, intimate restaurant is perfect for wining and dining your beloved over a romantic lunch or dinner. Its traditional menu – based on beef, grilled fish and seafood, including *coquilles St-Jacques* (scallops) from St-Brieuc – changes tempo in accordance with the seasons.

### Chez La Mère Pourcel

TRADITIONAL FRENCH €€

(☎02 96 39 03 80; 3 place des Merciers; menus €22-35; ☎lunch & dinner Tue-Sat & lunch Sun) The beamed dining room of this Dinan institution hasn't changed (much) since it was built in the 15th century. Stellar staples include regional salt-marsh lamb.

### Le Chat Botté

TRADITIONAL FRENCH €€

(☎02 96 85 31 58; 18 passage de la Tour de l'Horloge; menus €10-17.50; ☎closed Mon) 'Puss in Boots' is a local old-town favourite for fragrant grilled fish and crêpes.

### Le Patio

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE €

(☎02 96 39 84 87; 9 place du Champ Clos; menus €11-13; ☎noon-late, closed Mon & lunch Sun; ☎) Set around a leafy garden, this contemporary spot is great for international cuisine, tapas or just a drink. The kitchen closes at midnight.



### Information

**Post office** (7 place Duclos)

**Tourist office** (☎02 96 87 69 76; www.dinan-tourisme.com; 9 rue du Château; ☎9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat) Offers internet access at €1 per hour.



### Getting There & Around

**BICYCLE Cycles Gauthier** (☎02 96 85 07 60; 15 rue Déroier; ☎9am-noon & 2-7pm Tue-Sat) rents out bikes for €15 per day from its shop near the train station.

**BUS** Buses leave from place Duclos and the bus station. **Illeño** (☎02 99 26 16 00) runs several daily services:

**Dinard** €2.40, 40 minutes

**Rennes** €3.90, 1¼ hours

**TAXI** Call ☎06 08 00 80 90.

**TRAIN** Change in Dol de Bretagne:

**Rennes** €13.50, one hour

**St-Malo** €8.50, one hour, five daily

## Paimpol

POP 8170

Set around a working fishing harbour and ringed by half-timbered buildings, Paimpol (Pempoull in Breton) is rich in history. It was the one-time home port of the Icelandic fishery, when the town's fishermen would set sail to the seas around Iceland for seven months and more at a stretch. And it's rich in legends – the fishermen lost at sea are recalled in folk tales and *chants de marins* (sea shanties).

South of the two harbours, Paimpol's town centre clusters around the market square of place du Martray. The bus and train stations are 100m south of this square.



### Sights & Activities

Enquire at the tourist office about canoeing and kayaking operators.



### La Vapeur du Trieux

STEAM TRAIN

(☎08 92 39 14 27; www.vapeurdutrieux.com; adult/child return €22/11; ☼May-Sep) Between May and September, the 1922 steam train chuffs along the riverbank on a beautiful journey from Paimpol's station to the artists' town of **Pontrieux**, where there's time for a pleasant meal and a stroll before the return journey. Reserve at least one day ahead.

### Abbaye de Beauport

ABBEY

(☎02 96 55 18 58; www.abbaye-beauport.com, in French; adult/child €5.50/2.5; ☼10am-7pm) If you have wheels (or you're up for a glorious 1½-hour walk along the seashore from the town harbour), head 3.5km east to the romantic abbey. En route, stop at the Pointe de Guilben for beautiful bay views. The tourist office has a free map.

### Musée de la Mer

MARITIME MUSEUM

(Sea Museum; ☎02 96 22 02 19; rue Labenne; adult/child €4.70/2; ☼10.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm) This splendid little museum charts the Paimpol region's maritime history and

is, rather appropriately, set in a former cod-drying factory.

### Musée du Costume Breton

CLOTHING MUSEUM

(☎02 96 22 02 19; rue Raymond Pellier; adult/child €2.80/1.20; ☼3-7pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug) For land-bound history, in the summer months you can visit this rather curious museum containing traditional clothing items.

### Île de Bréhat

ISLAND

Paimpol is the closest port to Île de Bréhat (Enez Vriad in Breton), a tiny, car-free island 8km offshore to the north. With a population of 350, it stretches just 5km from north to south. The most idyllic time to visit is in spring, when Mediterranean wildflowers bloom in its gentle microclimate. In the citadel on the southwestern edge you can visit the **glass-making factory** (☎02 96 20 09 09; www.verrieresdebrehat.com; admission €1). There is a seasonal municipal campground; contact Paimpol's tourist office for information.

### Vedettes de Bréhat

(☎02 96 55 79 50; www.vedettesdebrehat.com) operates ferries (adult/child return €8.50/7, 15 minutes, at least eight sailings daily) to Île de Bréhat from Pointe L'Arcouest, 6km north of Paimpol. Bikes cost an extra €15 return to transport, which is only possible on certain in- and out-bound journeys. It's cheaper to rent a bike on the island; shops line the right-hand side of the road when you get off the boat. The best way to protect the fragile environment, however, is to walk.



### Festivals & Events

#### Festival de Chant de Marin

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

(www.paimpol-festival.com) Traditional Breton dancing takes place on the quays in August every even-numbered year.



### Sleeping & Eating

#### Hôtel Le Terre-Neuvas

HOTEL €

(☎02 96 55 14 14; www.le-terre-neuvas.com; 16 quai Duguay Trouin; d €34-48; ☼mid-Jan-mid-Dec; ☼) Perched right beside the harbour, and a few steps from the historic town centre as well as the seafront, the Terre-Neuvas has comfortable, incredibly inexpensive rooms, some with views out to sea. Its excellent restaurant (*menus* €20 to €30) is a popular port of call for guests and nonguests.

#### K' Loys

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(☎02 96 20 40 01; www.k-loys.com; 21 quai Morand; d €55-110; ☼) Each of the 15 rooms

at the cosy 'Chez Louise', a former ship-owner's mansion with good wheelchair access, is individually decorated with striped walls and paisley-pattern prints. There are lovely private lounges with richly upholstered booths to relax in over a drink.



### Camping Municipal de Cruckin

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 96 20 78 47; [www.camping-paimpol.com](http://www.camping-paimpol.com); rue de Cruckin; site/per person €7.50/3.50; ☼Apr-Sep) Near the Abbaye de Beauport, this eco-campground runs an environmentally conscious program of energy, water and waste management. It's beautifully sited on the Baie de Kérit, 3.5km southeast of town off the road to Plouha.

### Ty Krampoux

CRÊPERIE €

(☎02 96 20 86 34; 11 place du Martray; crêpes & galettes €2-10) Over two timber-balustraded levels packed with Paimpolaises (who wait outside for the doors to open), this cornerstone of the community on Paimpol's pretty main square prepares perfectly buttered Breton crêpes, as well as scrumptious fillings such as chocolate-laced chestnut cream. In summer more laden tables spill onto a pavement terrace. Order a pitcher of cider and settle back for an authentic slice of Breton life.

### L'Islandais

SEAFOOD €€

(☎02 96 20 93 00; <http://creperie-restaurant-l-islandais.com>; 19 quai Morand; menus €18-35) You'll find a clutch of laid-back, quality seafood restaurants along the western side of the harbour, including this popular spot where the seafood platters are large enough to share between two.

### Self-Catering

Paimpol's Tuesday-morning **market** spreads over place Gambetta and place du Martray. On weekends, vendors sell freshly shucked oysters at quai Duguay Trouin.



### Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 96 20 83 16; [www.paimpol-goelo.com](http://www.paimpol-goelo.com); place de la République; ☼9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm & 4.30-6.30pm Sun) Sells local rambling guides (€3).



### Getting There & Around

**BICYCLE Intersport Paimpol** (☎02 96 20 59 46; zone de Kerpuns), near the massive Carrefour supermarket complex, rents a wide variety of bikes and kayaks.

**BUS Tibus** (☎08 10 22 22 22) runs buses to and from St-Brieuc (€2.40, 1½ hours). In summer most continue to Pointe L'Arcouest.

**TRAIN** There are several trains or SNCF buses daily between Paimpol and Guingamp (€7, 45 minutes), where you can pick up connections to Brest, St-Brieuc and Rennes.

## FINISTÈRE

The country's westernmost *département*, Finistère has a wind-whipped coastline scattered with lighthouses and beacons lashed by waves. Finistère's southern prow, Cornouaille, takes its name from early Celts who sailed from Cornwall and other parts of Britain to settle here, and today it harbours the Breton language, customs and culture.

### Roscoff

POP 3780

Unlike many of its industrial and less-than-beautiful sister Channel ports, Roscoff (Rosko in Breton) provides a captivating first glimpse of Brittany. Granite houses dating from the 16th century wreath the pretty docks, which are surrounded by emerald-green fields producing cauliflowers, onions, tomatoes, new potatoes and artichokes.

Once upon a time, Roscoff farmers known as 'Johnnies', wearing distinctive horizontally striped tops, loaded up their boats with plaited strings of locally grown small pink onions and crossed the Channel to the UK, then peddled – and pedalled – with their onions hanging from their bikes' handlebars, creating the traditional British stereotype of the French today. This trade began in the early 19th century, reaching its peak in the 1920s. Today, Johnnies have a near mythical status in the area, with a number still continuing the trade and a new wave of younger-generation Johnnies ensuring the survival of this iconic tradition.

Roscoff's waters conceal beds of *goémon* (algae), harvested for foodstuffs as well as *thalassothérapie* health and beauty treatments.



### Sights & Activities

**Église Notre Dame de Kroaz-Batz** CHURCH (place Lacaze-Duthiers; ☼9am-noon & 2-6pm) The most obvious sight in Roscoff is this unusual church at the heart of the old town.



# The Breton Coast

Brittany's rugged coastline is one of the region's best-kept secrets. With brilliant sand beaches framing traditional fishing villages, rocky cliffs towering above the churning swell of the North Atlantic, and lots of activities to keep you occupied, there's plenty to discover.

## Superb Stretches of Sand

**1** Don't associate Brittany with beaches? Think again... Yes the water may be freezing, but the sand is spectacular and the backing sublime at St-Malo (p234), or Quiberon (p265). Alternatively, find your own patch of sand on the beaches of Belle Île (p267).

## Hiking the Coasts

**2** Get out into nature on the coastal hiking trail (p244) from Cancale to St-Malo, or from Morgat to Cap de la Chèvre (p256). For a challenge, walk the 45km coastal path on Île d'Ouessant (p254) or the 95km path around Belle Île (p267).

## Coastal Villages

**3** Find your own quiet bliss in the village life of the fishing port of Roscoff (p247), charming Camaret-sur-Mer (p257) and our personal favourite, chic hideaway Cancale (p242).

## Island Life

**4** Take the ferry to Île d'Ouessant (p254), with its rugged coastal path and great activities, or head out of season to Belle Île (p267), the southern coast's standout star. To get off the beaten track, head to Île de Batz (p250).

## Get Active!

**5** You can dive, windsurf and hire catamarans in Dinard (p240), canoe or kayak in Paimpol (p246), and hire bikes pretty much anywhere, though we recommend Presqu'île de Crozon (p255) and any of Brittany's islands.

### Clockwise from top left

- 1.** The beach at St-Malo
- 2.** Brittany's rugged coastline
- 3.** Boats in the harbour of Camaret-sur-Mer


**1**
**3**






2

JEAN-BERNARD CABILLET



With its Renaissance belfry rising above the flat landscape, the 16th-century Flamboyant Gothic structure is one of Brittany's most impressive churches.

### Maison des Johnnies

HISTORY MUSEUM

(02 98 61 25 48; 48 rue Brizeux; adult/child €4/2.50) Photographs trace Roscoff's roaming onion farmers from the early 19th century at this popular museum. Tours at 5pm on Tuesdays between mid-June and mid-September include a free hour-long meeting with Johnnies from 6pm to 7pm. Call ahead for tour times, as they change frequently.

### Le Jardin Exotique de Roscoff

GARDEN

(02 98 61 29 19; www.jardinexotiqueroscoff.com; adult/child €5/2; 10am-7pm, closed Dec-Feb) Wander through 3000 species of exotic plants, many from the southern hemisphere, at this impressive exotic garden.

### Centre de Découverte des Algues

MUSEUM

(02 98 69 77 05; www.decouvertedesalgues.com, in French; 5 rue Victor Hugo; admission free, walks per adult/child €5/3.50; 10am-7pm) You can learn about local seaweed harvesting at this enthusiastically run museum, which also organises guided walks and gives regular free lectures (often in English and German).

### Thalasso Roscoff

SEAWATER BATHS

(02 98 25 00 20 99; www.thalasso.com, in French; rue Victor Hugo; closed Dec) The perfect way to follow a visit to the Centre de Découverte des Algues is to immerse yourself in the stuff at this bathing complex, which offers health-inducing activities including a heated seawater pool, a *hammam* (Turkish bath) and a jacuzzi (€11 for all three).

### Île de Batz

ISLAND

Bordering what is basically a 4-sq-km vegetable garden fertilised by seaweed, the beaches on the Île de Batz (pronounced 'ba, Enez Vaz' in Breton; www.iledebatz.com) are a peaceful place to bask. The mild island climate supports the luxuriant **Jardins Georges Delaselle** (02 98 61 75 65; www.jardin-georgesdelaselle.fr; adult/child €4.60/2; 2-6pm Wed-Mon Apr-Oct, daily Jul & Aug), founded in the 19th century, with over 1500 plants from all five continents.

Ferries (adult/child return €7.50/4, bike €7, 15 minutes each way) between Roscoff and Île de Batz run every 30 minutes between 8am and 8pm from late June to mid-

September; there are about eight sailings daily during the rest of the year.

On the island, **Le Saout** (02 98 61 77 65) and **Roulez Jeunesse** (02 98 61 76 91) rent bicycles for around €10 per day.

## Sleeping & Eating

Roscoff's hotels are home to some first-rate restaurants.



### Hôtel du Centre

BOUTIQUE HOTEL €

(02 98 61 24 25; www.chezjanie.com; r €69-99; mid-Feb-mid-Nov; 1) Minimal and sleek rooms at this boutique hotel look like they've been lifted out of a magazine, and indeed they've featured in many. For a sea-view room looking out over the postcard-pretty old port, add a further €25. But it's perhaps best known for its restaurant, **Chez Janie** (menu €24), serving Breton classics like *kig ha farz* – a farmers' family meal based around the Breton cake *far*, cooked in a linen bag within a boiling bacon and vegetable stew.

### Le Temps de Vivre

BOUTIQUE HOTEL €€

(02 98 19 33 19; www.tycoz.com/letempsdevivre; 19 place Lacaze Duthiers; d €140-268; 1) This glamorous place is hidden away in a lovely stone mansion complete with its own tower just opposite the church. With fantastic sea views from some rooms, decor that is a great blend of modernity and tradition, plus friendly staff, this is one of Roscoff's very best options. Internet access is free through cables in each room.

### Hôtel Les Arcades

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(02 98 69 70 45; www.en.hotel-les-arcades-roscoff.com; 15 rue Amiral Réveillère; r €46-62; 1) Perched right above the rocks on the waterfront in the town's heart, this cosy hotel, run by the same family for nearly a century, has 24 light-filled, light-coloured rooms and a glass-paned restaurant (mains around €15) serving up seafood and spectacular views.

### Hôtel Les Chardons Bleus

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(02 98 69 72 03; www.roscoffhotel.com, in French; 4 rue Amiral Réveillère; d €70-95; mid-Mar-Jan; 1) Set back just 100m from the port, in the town centre, the 'Thistles', a Logis de France, has 10 comfortable rooms, and an old-fashioned formal restaurant (*menus* €10 to €40) specialising in seafood.

## Camping Aux Quatre Saisons

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 98 69 70 86; [www.camping-aux4saisons.fr](http://www.camping-aux4saisons.fr); Le Ruguel; sites €9-11; ☼Easter-Sep) Close to a sandy beach in the grounds of a lovely 19th-century mansion, this campground is approximately 3km southwest of Roscoff.

## La P'tite Fabrik

CRÊPERIE €

(☎02 98 69 92 69; 18 rue Jules Ferry) Watch artisan crêpes being handmade in the open kitchen of this crêpe shop in the old town, and perhaps pick some up for a beach picnic.

## Le Surcouf

BRASSERIE €

(☎02 98 69 71 89; 14 rue Amiral Réveillère; menus €11-55) A reliable year-round opener, this brasserie-restaurant is unsurprisingly popular with locals. Opening hours and days can vary.



## Information

**Post office** (19 rue Gambetta)

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 61 12 13; [www.roscoff-tourisme.com](http://www.roscoff-tourisme.com); quai d'Auxerre; ☼9.15am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, open Sun Jul-Aug) The new tourist office is next to the lighthouse. There's free internet access from the public computer here.



## Getting There & Away

**BUS** The combined bus and train station is on rue Ropartz Morvan. **Cars Bihan** (☎02 98 83 45 80) operates buses departing from the ferry terminal (Port de Blosson) and passing by the town centre:

**Brest** €2, 1½ to two hours, up to four daily

**Morlaix** €2, 40 minutes, several daily

**FERRY Brittany Ferries** (☎reservations in France 08 25 82 88 28, in UK 0871 244 0744; [www.brittany-ferries.com](http://www.brittany-ferries.com)) links Roscoff to Plymouth in England (five to nine hours, one to three daily year-round) and Cork in Ireland (14 hours, once-weekly June to September). Boats leave from Port de Blosson, about 2km east of the town centre.

**TRAIN** There are regular trains and SNCF buses to Morlaix (€5.50, 35 minutes), where you can make connections to Brest, Quimper and St-Brieuc.

## Morlaix

POP 16,600

At the bottom of a deep valley sluicing through northeastern Finistère, Morlaix is an engaging and easily accessed city that's also a good gateway to the coast and the

*enclos paroissiaux* (enclosed parishes), the rich sculptures surrounding many of the parish churches fanning out to the south (such as the 16th-century masterpiece in the village of Pleyben).

Towering above the town, the arched 58m-high railway viaduct was built in 1863.



## Sights & Activities

### Église St-Melaine

CHURCH

(☼9am-noon & 2-6pm) The late-15th-century Flamboyant Gothic Église St-Melaine bears a star-studded barrel-vault roof and polychrome wooden statues, including St Peter and the eponymous St Melaine.

### Le Musée de Morlaix

MUSEUM

(☎02 98 88 07 75; [www.musee.ville.morlaix.fr](http://www.musee.ville.morlaix.fr); place des Jacobins; ☼10am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sat & Mon, daily in summer) The area's history, archaeology and art are showcased at Le Musée de Morlaix. The museum also incorporates the beautifully preserved half-timbered house nearby, **La Maison à Pondalez** (☎02 98 88 68 88; 9 Grand' Rue). Tickets per adult/child cost €4/2.50 for both the museum and the house.

### Le Léon à Fer et à Flots

BOAT TRIP

(☎02 98 62 07 52; [www.aferafloets.org](http://www.aferafloets.org), in French; adult/child €25/13; ☼Apr-Sep) A great way to see the area by land and sea combines a boat trip through the islands of the Baie de Morlaix and a picturesque train trip between Roscoff and Morlaix with Le Léon à Fer et à Flots.



## Sleeping & Eating

Rue Ange de Guernisac has several enticing restaurants.

### Ty Pierre

B&amp;B €

(☎06 80 01 37 75; 1bis place de Viarmes; s/d/tr with shared bathroom €34/50/65; ☼) Artworks and artefacts Pierre-Yves Jacquet picked up on his Asian travels now decorate his *chambre d'hôte's* 10 spacious rooms. At this price there's no lift (count on climbing three or four floors), and most rooms don't have their own bathroom (they're just along the wide corridors), but bikes are available for rent from €15 per day. Bonus: the B&B's just across from the cosy Breton bar, La Chope (closed Monday), with French football on the telly and cider on tap.

### Hôtel de l'Europe

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(☎02 98 62 11 99; [www.hotel-europe-com.fr](http://www.hotel-europe-com.fr); 1 rue d'Aiguillon; r €60-88, ste €120; ☼) Regal, refined, yet still relaxed, the Hôtel de l'Europe

occupies an elegant 19th-century building. Moulded ceilings, carved panelling and sculpted woodwork fill the sweeping public areas; the romantic guestrooms have rich apricot and rose tones, and mod cons including free broadband.

**Grand Café de la Terrasse** BRASSERIE €  
(02 98 88 20 25; 31 place des Otages; mains €12.50-16.50; ☺8am-midnight Mon-Sat) In the heart of town, Morlaix' showpiece is this stunning 1872-established brasserie with an original central spiral staircase. Sip tea, coffee or something stronger, or sup on classical brasserie fare like rabbit and leek crumble.

## Information

**Café de l'Aurore** (02 98 88 03 05; 17 rue Traverse; ☺Mon-Sat) Has a free internet terminal for bar customers.

**Tourist office** (02 98 62 14 94; www.tourisme.morlaix.fr; place des Otages; ☺10am-2.30pm & 2-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-12.30pm Sun). A few steps southwest below the railway viaduct. From the train station, take rue de Léon south, then turn left and descend the stairs of rue Courte.

## Getting There & Away

Morlaix has frequent train services:

**Brest** €10, 45 minutes

**Paris Montparnasse** €66, four hours

**Roscoff** €5.50, 30 minutes

## Brest

POP 146,500

A major port and military base that doesn't feel as remote from the rest of the country as it looks on the map, Brest is big, bold and dynamic, capping the department of Finistère and looking towards the Atlantic. Destroyed by Allied air attacks during WWII, modern Brest is a postwar creation, which, while enjoying its scenic moments, has none of the Breton charm of the nearby port of Roscoff. You'll see French sailors' blue uniforms with gold epaulettes throughout the town, as well as plenty of students from Brest's university, though most people come here on the way through to the sea-swept Île d'Ouessant.

## Sights & Activities

**Océanopolis** AQUARIUM  
(02 98 34 40 40; www.oceanopolis.com; port de Plaisance; adult/child €16.50/11; ☺9am-6pm)

With 50 tanks in three thematic pavilions – polar, tropical and temperate – the gleaming modern aquarium is great, especially on (not uncommon) rainy days. Tip: buying your ticket online for the same price allows you to skip the queues and head straight in to view the kelp forests, seals, crabs, anemones, penguins, sharks and more. It's about 3km east of the city centre; take bus 15 from place de la Liberté.

**Musée de la Marine** MARITIME MUSEUM  
(Naval Museum; 02 98 22 12 39; www.musee-marine.fr; adult/child €5.50/free; ☺10am-6.30pm, closed Tue mid-Sep-Mar) Learn about Brest's maritime military history at this excellent museum, housed within the fortified 13th-century Château de Brest, which was built to defend the harbour on the River Penfeld. Following the 1532 union of Brittany and France, both the castle and its harbour became a royal fortress. From its ramparts there are striking views of the harbour and the naval base. Museum tickets cost €4 and are available from the town's tourist office.

**FREE Tour Tanguy** TOWER  
(02 98 00 88 60; place Pierre Péron; ☺10am-noon & 2-7pm, closed Mon, Tue & Fri Oct-May) A sobering reminder of what Brest looked like on the eve of WWII can be seen at this 14th-century tower. Other exhibits on the town's history include the documented visit of three Siamese ambassadors in 1686, who presented gifts to the court of Louis XIV; rue de Siam was renamed in their honour.

**La Société Maritime Azenor** CRUISES  
(02 98 41 46 23; www.azenor.fr, in French; adult/child €15.50/11; ☺Apr-Sep) This well-regarded cruise operator offers 1½-hour cruises around the harbour and the naval base two or three times daily from both the Port de Commerce (which is near the castle) and the Port de Plaisance (which is opposite Océanopolis).

## Festivals & Events

**Les Jeudis du Port** MUSIC FESTIVAL  
(Harbour Thursdays; ☺7.30pm-midnight Thu mid-Jul-late Aug) Plan to be in Brest on a Thursday night during summer when Les Jeudis du Port fill the port with live rock, reggae and world music, as well as street performances and children's events.



## Sleeping



### Hôtel St Louis

BOUTIQUE HOTEL €

(☎02 98 44 23 91; [www.brest-hotel.com](http://www.brest-hotel.com), in French; 6 rue Algésiras; d €30-55; 🏠) This sassy hotel has a 'boutique-on-a-budget' feel. The spartan rooms are livened by eccentric flourishes such as pop art prints, brightly painted walls and retro bathrooms tucked away within cupboards. Simple and cheap, but remarkably cool – reserve ahead.

### Hôtel de la Rade

HOTEL €

(☎02 98 44 47 76; [www.hoteldelarade.com](http://www.hoteldelarade.com); 6 rue de Siam; s €52-62, d €51-66; 🏠) Right in the centre of town, this good-value place has small but smart and stylishly simple rooms with tiny, yet functional bathrooms. Some rooms have good views onto the harbour.

### Hôtel Continental

HOTEL €€

(☎02 98 80 50 40; [www.oceaniahotels.com](http://www.oceaniahotels.com); rue Émile Zola; s €120-150, d €170-190; 🏠🍷) With sleek, streamlined rooms and crisp white bathrooms finished off with tiled friezes, the classy Continental has a much more lavish, art deco-styled interior than its plain exterior lets on. All 73 soundproofed rooms are equipped with mod cons including satellite flatscreen TV. Considerable reductions on room rates on weekends.

### Auberge de Jeunesse Éthic Étapes

HOSTEL €

(☎02 98 41 90 41; [brest.aj.cis@wanadoo.fr](mailto:brest.aj.cis@wanadoo.fr); rue de Kerbriant; dm incl sheets & breakfast €17.50; 🏠) Near Océanopolis and a stone's throw from the artificial beach at Moulin Blanc, this bright, modern 118-bed hostel has bike storage and good wheelchair access. To stay here you'll need to be a member of Hostelling International – membership can be bought on arrival (under/over 26 €11/17). Take bus 15 from the train station, or the more regular bus 3 from place de la Liberté to the Port de Plaisance.

### Camping du Goulet

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 98 45 86 84; [www.campingdugoulet.com](http://www.campingdugoulet.com), in French; Ste-Anne du Portzic; sites €13-23; 🏠🍷) This huge, hilly campground is in Ste-Anne du Portzic, 6km southwest of Brest and 400m from the sea. Take bus 28 from rue Georges Clemenceau (near the tourist office) to the Le Cosquer stop.



## Eating

### Ma Petite Folie

SEAFOOD €€

(☎02 98 42 44 42; Port de Plaisance; menus €20-40; ☺Mon-Sat) Aboard an old green-

and-white lobster-fishing boat strung with buoys and forever beached at Moulin Blanc, this character-filled restaurant has exceptional crab, prawns and fresh fish in butter sauce, ideally finished off with pear tart for dessert and washed down with crisp white wine.

### St Ex

MODERN FRENCH €

(☎02 98 46 33 53; 4 rue de Siam; menus €10-40) This rightly popular crêpe specialist is not your run-of-the-mill café, but a smart and buzzing restaurant where the menu extends to more elaborate seafood and meat dishes. That said, the crêpes here are some of the best we have tasted.

### Self-catering

Head to **Les Halles St-Louis** (☎9am-1pm & 4-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), Brest's covered market, for self-catering supplies. An **open-air market** takes place out front on Sunday mornings.



## Information

**Post office** (place Général Leclerc)

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 44 24 96; [www.brest-metropole-tourisme.fr](http://www.brest-metropole-tourisme.fr); place de la Liberté; ☺9.30am-7pm Mon-Sat & 10am-noon Sun)



## Getting There & Away

**AIR** Brest's newly expanded **airport** ([www.brest.aeroport.fr](http://www.brest.aeroport.fr)) has regular Ryanair flights to/from London (Luton), Dublin and Marseille; Flybe flights to/from Birmingham, Manchester and Southampton; and Air France flights to Paris, Lyon and Nice.

**BOAT** Ferries to Île d'Ouessant leave from the Port de Commerce. In summer, **Azénor** (☎02 98 41 46 23; [www.azenor.com](http://www.azenor.com), in French) connects Brest with Camaret-sur-Mer on the Crozon Peninsula (one way adult/child €9/7, one hour, twice daily except Saturday during July and August).

**BUS** Brest's **bus station** (☎02 98 44 46 73) is beside the train station.

**Le Conquet** €2, 45 minutes, six daily

**Roscoff** €2, 1½ hours, four daily

**CAR & MOTORCYCLE** Hire companies:

**ADA** (☎02 98 44 44 88; 9 av Georges Clemenceau)

**Europcar** (☎02 98 44 66 88; rue Voltaire)

**TRAIN** For Roscoff, change trains at Morlaix.

**Morlaix** €10, 45 minutes

**Paris Montparnasse** from €69, 4½ hours, around 15 daily

**Quimper** €15.50, 1¼ hours

**Rennes** €32, two hours

## Getting Around

**BUS** Shuttle buses (one way €4.60) connect the bus station and airport approximately hourly; you can buy tickets on the bus. The local bus network **Bibus** (02 98 80 30 30) sells tickets good for two hours for €1.25 and day passes for €3.40. There's an information kiosk on place de la Liberté.

**TAXI** Call 02 98 80 18 01 or 02 98 80 68 06. A taxi for the 10km airport trip costs around €15.

## Île d'Ouessant

POP 878

Although it's frequented by summer visitors by the ferryload, free-roaming little black sheep and traditional houses give an ends-of-the-earth feel to the windswept Île d'Ouessant (Enez Eusa in Breton, meaning 'Island of Terror'; Ushant in English) – best experienced by hiking its 45km craggy coastal path.

## Sights & Activities

### Musée des Phares et des Balises

LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM

(Lighthouse & Beacon Museum; 02 98 48 80 70; adult/child €4.30/3; 11am–6pm) The black-and-white-striped Phare de Créac'h is the world's most powerful lighthouse. Beaming two white flashes every 10 seconds and visible for over 50km, it serves as a beacon for over 50,000 ships entering the Channel each year. Beneath is the island's main museum, which tells the story of these vital navigation aids; more interesting is the section on shipwrecks and underwater archaeology.

### Écomusée d'Ouessant

ECOMUSEUM

(02 98 48 86 37; Maison du Niou; adult/child €3.50/2.40; 10.30am–6.30pm, closed Mon Oct–Mar) Two typical local houses make up this small 'ecomuseum'. One re-creates a traditional homestead, furnished like a ship's cabin, with furniture fashioned from driftwood and painted in bright colours to mask

its imperfections; the other explores the island's history and customs. A combined ticket for both the lighthouse museum and the ecomuseum cost costs €7/4.50 for an adult/child. Check ahead as schedules are liable to change.

## Sleeping & Eating

### Hôtel Roc'h Ar Mor

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(02 98 48 80 19; pagesperso-orange.fr/rocharmor; Lampaul; r €55–87; mid-Feb–mid-Nov; ☎) In a superb location next to the Baie de Lampaul, this appealing 15-room hotel with sunlit blue-and-white rooms and good wheelchair access also boasts a good restaurant (half-board is recommended here), with a terrace overlooking the ocean. Thanks to the hotel's very own smokehouse, excellent smoked fish and meats regularly appear on the imaginative evening menu.

### Auberge de Jeunesse

HOSTEL €

(02 98 48 84 53; auberge-ouessant.com; La Croix-Rouge, Lampaul; dm incl breakfast €17.50; closed Dec–Jan) This friendly hostel, on the hill above Lampaul, has two- to six-person rooms. It's popular with school and walking groups; reservations are essential. Under 26s and students stay for €16.

### Camping Municipal

CAMPGROUND €

(02 98 48 84 65; fax 02 98 48 83 99; Stang Ar Glan, Lampaul; per person €3.05, plus per tent €3.05; Apr–Sep) About 500m east of Lampaul, this sprawling 100m-pitch place looks more like a football field than a campground.

### Crêperie Ti A Dreuz

CRÊPERIE €

(02 98 48 83 01; Lampaul; crêpes around €3–9; Sat–Thu Easter–Sep) You could be forgiven for thinking you'd been at sea too long, or knocked back too much Breton cider, but 'the slanting house' is so-named for its wonky walls. This quaint island crêperie serves delicious galettes: try the *ouessantine*, with creamy potato, cheese and sausage.

### Ty Korn

SEAFOOD €€

(02 98 48 87 33; Lampaul; lunch/dinner menus €15/31; closed Sun & Mon) The ground floor of this hyperfriendly place is a bar, serving Breton black-wheat beers (made from the same *blé noire* as Breton galettes); upstairs there's an excellent restaurant where seafood is a speciality. Opening hours can vary, though the bar stays open until 1am.

## ÎLE D'OUessant BEACHES

**Plage de Corz**, 600m south of Lampaul, is the island's best beach. Other good spots to stretch out are **Plage du Prat**, **Plage de Yuzin** and **Plage Ar Lan**. All are easily accessible by bike from Lampaul or Port du Stiff.

## i Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 48 85 83; [www.ot-ouessant.fr](http://www.ot-ouessant.fr); place de l'Église, Lampaul; ☉9am-1pm & 1.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sun) Sells walking brochures and can hook you up with operators offering horse riding, sailing and other activities.

## i Getting There & Away

**AIR Finist'air** (☎02 98 84 64 87; [www.finistair.fr](http://www.finistair.fr)) flies from Brest's airport to Ouessant in a mere 15 minutes. There are two flights daily (one way adult/child under 13yr €65/38, return adult/child under 13yr €93/57).

**BOAT** Ferries depart from Brest and the tiny town (and Brittany's most westerly point) of Le Conquet (Konk Leon in Breton). Buses operated by **Les Cars St-Mathieu** (☎02 98 89 12 02) link Brest with Le Conquet (€2, 45 minutes, six daily). In high summer it's a good idea to reserve at least two days in advance and to check in 30 minutes before departure. Transporting a bicycle costs €14.

**Penn Ar Bed** (☎02 98 80 80 80; [www.pennarbed.fr](http://www.pennarbed.fr)) sails from the Port de Commerce in Brest (adult/child return €30/18.50, 2½ hours) and from Le Conquet (€30/18.50, 1½ hours). Boats run between each port and the island two to five times daily from May to September and once daily between October and April. There are great savings to be made if you travel to Ouessant out of season – the return fare from both Brest and Le Conquet is just €18 from November to May (weekdays only).

## i Getting Around

**BICYCLE** Bike-hire operators have kiosks at the Port du Stiff ferry terminal and compounds just up the hill, as well as outlets in Lampaul. The going rate for town/mountain bikes is €10/14. You can save by booking and prepaying for a mountain bike (€10) at the Brest tourist office. Cycling on the coastal footpath is forbidden – the fragile turf is strictly reserved for walkers.

**MINIBUS** Islander-run minibus services such as **Ouessant Voyage** (☎06 07 90 07 43) meet the ferry at Port du Stiff and will shuttle you to Lampaul or your accommodation for a flat fare of €2 (to guarantee a seat in July and August, book ahead at the island tourist office or at the tourist office in Brest). For the return journey, the pick-up point is the car park beside Lampaul's church. Minibus owners also offer two-hour guided tours (€15 per person) of the island, in French.

**d'Armorique**, and one of the most scenic spots in Brittany. The partly forested peninsula is criss-crossed by some 145km of signed walking trails and excellent biking terrain, with crêperies in traditional stone buildings tucked in and around the hinterland.

## MÉNEZ-HOM

To feel Brittany's wind beneath your wings, the **Club Celtic de Vol Libre** (☎02 98 81 50 27; [www.vol-libre-menez-hom.com](http://www.vol-libre-menez-hom.com), in French; hang-gliding & paragliding from €70) offers three-hour hang-gliding and paragliding sessions off the rounded, 330m-high, heather- and grass-clad hump of Menez-Hom. Situated at the peninsula's eastern end, a surfaced road leads to the top of the summit, which has sublime views over the Baie de Douarnenez.

## LANDÉVENNEC

POP 358

To the north of Menez-Hom, the River Aulne flows into the Rade de Brest beside the pretty village of Landévennec, home to the ruined Benedictine **Abbaye St-Guenolé**. The abbey **museum** (☎02 98 27 35 90; adult/child €4/3; ☉10am-7pm, closed Sat May-Jun & late Sep) records the history of the settlement, founded by St Guenolé in 485 and the oldest Christian site in Brittany. Nearby, a new abbey is home to a contemporary community of monks, who run a little shop selling homemade fruit jellies.

## ARGOL

POP 833

Argol is a quaint village in its own right, but its main draw is the **Musée du Cidre du Bretagne** (Breton Cider Museum; ☎02 98 17 21 87; [www.musee-cidre-bretagne.com](http://www.musee-cidre-bretagne.com); adult/child €5/free; ☉2-7pm Apr-Sep). This former dairy's old stone buildings have been transformed into a working *cidrerie* producing over 300,000 bottles annually. A visit (allow around an hour, including a French-language but very visual film) takes you through the history of cider in Brittany and present-day production. And, of course, you get to taste it too. In July and August, one of the barns is used as a **crêperie** (crêpes €4.50-7.50; ☉noon-10pm).

## CROZON & MORGAT

POP 7950

The area's largest town, Crozon, is the engine room for the peninsula. On the water 2km south, Morgat was built in the 1930s

## Presqu'île de Crozon

The anchor-shaped Crozon Peninsula is part of the **Parc Naturel Régional**



## ECOBUZZ

Tucked away on the road to Crozon, 8km west of Le Faou, **Ferme Apicole de Terenez** (☎02 98 81 06 90; [www.ferme-apicole-de-terenez.com](http://www.ferme-apicole-de-terenez.com); Rosnoën; s incl breakfast €30-39, d €37-43) is abuzz with live bees that you can view in its **honey museum** (admission free; ☀9am-7pm). Depending on the season, you might also see *apiculteurs* (beekeepers) Irène and Stéphane Brindeau using environmentally friendly cold-extraction methods to extract the all-natural honey from giant combs in the workshop here, produced with the pollen of flowers and trees. You can buy honey, nougat and other homemade honey products like *hydromel* (*chouchen* in Breton; a fermented alcoholic drink made from honey and water).

But this little haven is more than just a hive of honey-making. The grounds extend to a private forest and even a private island (accessible by foot at low tide; you can walk around it in about 30 minutes), which guests can explore while staying in one of the farm's six timber-lined *chambre d'hôte* rooms. Rates include the sweetest of breakfasts, with the farm's honey baked into cakes, biscuits and more. The Brindeau family (who describe their work here as 'not a job, a passion') can also help organise kayak rental to paddle around the property and beyond. You can cook up a feast on the barbecue, or head just 200m down the road to the postcard-perfect waterfront restaurant **L'Ermitage** (☎02 98 81 93 61; menus €17-37; ☀lunch & dinner Wed-Sun, lunch Tue, closed Mar), serving fish caught right outside the door.

by the Peugeot brothers (of motor-vehicle fame) as a summer resort.



### Activities

#### Coastal Hike

WALK

Beyond the marina at the southern end of Morgat's fine sandy beach, the coastal path offers an excellent 13km hike (part of the GR34) along the sea cliffs to **Cap de la Chèvre**.

#### Boat Tours

BOAT TOURS

Morgat-based companies **Vedettes Rosmeur** (☎06 85 95 55 49; [www.rosmeur.fr](http://www.rosmeur.fr)) and **Vedettes Sirènes** (☎02 98 26 20 10) operate 45-minute boat trips to the colourful **sea caves** along the coast. Tours (adult/child €11/8) depart from Morgat harbour several times daily from April to September.



### Festivals & Events

Every Tuesday during July and August, free concerts take place on place d'Ys.

#### Festival du Bout du Monde

MUSIC FESTIVAL

(Festival of the End of the World; [www.festivaldu-boutdumonde.com](http://www.festivaldu-boutdumonde.com), in French) The place d'Ys area hosts the Festival du Bout du Monde festival in mid-August, featuring world music.



### Sleeping & Eating

Morgat's seafloor and place d'Ys are good spots to trawl for seafood restaurants.

#### Hôtel de la Baie

FAMILY HOTEL €

(☎02 98 27 07 51; [hotel.delabaie@presquile-crozon.com](mailto:hotel.delabaie@presquile-crozon.com); 46 bd de la Plage, Morgat; s from €27, d €45-72; ☀☎) One of the *very* few places to remain open year-round, this simple, friendly, family-run spot on Morgat's promenade has views over the ocean and is one of the best deals around – even better value if you take a room with shower only.

#### Camping Les Pieds Dans l'Eau

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 98 27 62 43; <http://lespiedsdansleau.free.fr>; St-Fiacre; per person/tent/car from €4/4/2.30; ☀mid-Jun–mid-Sep) 'Camping feet in the water' (almost literally, at high tide) is one of 16 campgrounds along the peninsula.

#### Saveurs et Marées

SEAFOOD €

(☎02 98 26 23 18; 52 bd Plage, Morgat; menus €14-45; ☀closed Feb) Our pick of Morgat's clutch of restaurants is this lemon-yellow cottage overlooking the sea for its breezy dining room, sunny terrace and consistently good, locally caught seafood (including succulent lobster).

### Information

**Crozon tourist office** (☎02 98 27 07 92; [www.crozon.com](http://www.crozon.com), in French; bd Pralognan; ☀9.15am-12.30pm & 2-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun) Housed in the former railway station, on the main road to Camaret.

**Morgat tourist office** (☎02 98 27 29 49; [www.officedetourisme-crozon-morgat.fr](http://www.officedetourisme-crozon-morgat.fr);



☉9.15am-12.30pm & 2-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun) Overlooks the promenade at the corner of bd de la Plage and doubles as the town's post office.

## CAMARET-SUR-MER

POP 2600

At the western extremity of the Crozon Peninsula, Camaret (unusually in French, the final 't' is pronounced) is a classic fishing village – or at least it was until early last century, when it was France's then-biggest crayfish port. Abandoned fishing-boat carcasses now decay in its harbour, but it remains an enchanting place that lures artists. There's an ever-increasing number of galleries dotted around town, particularly along rue de la Marne and around place St-Thomas, one block north of the waterfront.

### 👁 Sights

#### Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Rocamadour

CHURCH

(☉school holidays only) Its timber roof like an inverted ship's hull, the Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Rocamadour is dedicated to the sailors of Camaret, who have adorned it with votive offerings of oars, lifebuoys and model ships.

#### Pointe de Pen-Hir

MEMORIALS

Three kilometres south of Camaret, this is a spectacular headland bounded by steep, sheer sea cliffs, with two WWII memorials.

### 🍴 Sleeping & Eating

#### Hôtel Vauban

HOTEL €

(☎02 98 27 91 36; 4 quai du Styvel; d €41-51; ☉Feb-Nov) Its airy rooms are contemporary but the Vauban's old-fashioned hospitality extends to its large rear garden, with a barbecue to grill your own fish and a piano to play. Its bar remains a favourite with Camaret's old-timers too.

#### Crêperie Rocamadour

CRÊPERIE €

(☎02 98 27 93 17; quai Kléber; mains €10-14; ☉closed Mon & Tue Sep-Jun) Close to the tourist office, this beamed-ceilinged place turns out carefully prepared galettes as well as mains such as citrus-infused salmon. Finish off with a flaming flambéed crêpe or one smothered in melted chocolate.

#### Del Mare

SEAFOOD €

(☎02 98 27 97 22; 16 quai Gustave Toudouze; menus €13.50-26.50; ☉closed Tue & Wed early Apr-Jun & Sep-mid-Nov) Seafood is the order of the day at this marine-styled place on the main stretch of waterfront, with a clutch of

tables on its little timber terrace. Service is prompt and friendly.

### i Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 27 93 60; www.camaret-sur-mer.com, in French; 15 quai Kléber; ☉9.15am-noon & 2-6pm, closed Sun Sep-Jun) On the waterfront.

### i Getting There & Around

**BICYCLE** To rent a bike, contact **Point Bleu** (☎02 98 27 09 04; quai Kador, Morgat) or, in summer, the open-air stall in front of Morgat's tourist office. The daily rate is €10.

**BOAT Azénor** (☎02 98 41 46 23; www.azenor.com, in French) runs seasonal ferries between Brest and the Presqu'île de Crozon.

From mid-April to mid-September, **Penn Ar Bed** (☎02 98 80 80 80; www.pennarbed.fr) sails between Camaret and Île d'Ouessant (adult/child return from €18/15.50 September to June, €30/17 July to August).

**BUS** Five buses daily run from Quimper to Crozon (€2, 1¼ hours), continuing to Camaret (€2), and up to four go from Camaret and Crozon to Brest (€2, 1¼ hours, daily). Buses also run between Morgat, Crozon and Camaret several times daily (€2, 10 minutes).

## Quimper

POP 67,250

Small enough to feel like a village, with its slanted half-timbered houses and narrow cobbled streets, and large enough to buzz as the troubadour of Breton culture and arts, Quimper (pronounced 'kam-pair') is Finistère's thriving capital. Derived from the Breton word *kemper*, meaning 'confluence', Quimper sits at the juncture of the small Rivers Odet and Steir, criss-crossed by footbridges with cascading flowers. Despite being one of Brittany's most charming towns, it is nevertheless often overlooked by visitors.

### 👁 Sights & Activities

#### Cathedral St-Corentin

CATHEDRAL

(place St-Corentin; ☉9.30am-noon & 1.30-6.30pm) At the centre of the city stands this impressive cathedral, the distinctive kink built into its soaring light-filled interior said by some to symbolise Christ's head inclined on one shoulder as he was dying on the cross. Begun in 1239, the cathedral wasn't completed until the 1850s, with the seamless addition of its dramatic twin spires. Between them, high on the west facade, is an equestrian statue of King Gradlon, the city's mythical 5th-century founder.

## Musée des Beaux-Arts

ART MUSEUM

(☎02 98 95 45 20; 40 place St-Corentin; adult/child €4.50/2.50; ☼10am-7pm) The ground-floor halls are home to some fairly morbid 16th- to 20th-century European paintings, but things lighten up on the upper levels of the town's main art museum. A room dedicated to Quimper-born poet Max Jacob includes sketches by Picasso.

## Musée Départemental Breton

BRETON MUSEUM

(☎02 98 95 21 60; 1 rue du Roi Gradlon; adult/child €4/free; ☼9am-6pm) Recessed behind a magnificent stone courtyard beside the cathedral, this museum is housed in the former bishop's palace. Superb exhibits showcase Breton history, furniture, costumes, crafts and archaeology. Adjoining the museum is the **Jardin de l'Évêché** (Bishop's Palace Garden; admission free; ☼9am-5pm or 6pm).

For even more serenity, pop into the hidden, flower-filled **Jardin de la Retraite** (☼9am-7.15pm), secluded behind high walls.

Following the switchback path just east of the tourist office up the 72m-high **Mont Frugy** rewards with captivating city views.



## Tours

### Vedettes de l'Odet

BOAT TOURS

(☎08 25 80 08 01, 02 98 57 00 58) From June to September, Vedettes de l'Odet runs boat trips (adult/child €25/15, 1¼ hours) from Quimper along the serene Odet estuary to Bénodet, departing from quai Neuf.



## Festivals & Events

### Festival de Cornouaille

CELTIC FESTIVAL

(www.festival-cornouaille.com, in French) A celebration of traditional Celtic music, costumes and culture takes place between the third Saturday and fourth Sunday of July. After the traditional

## Quimper



festival, classical-music concerts are held at different venues around town.

## Sleeping

Unfortunately, Quimper has a chronic shortage of inexpensive accommodation, and none in the old city.

### Hôtel Gradlon

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €€

(☎02 98 95 04 39; [www.hotel-gradlon.com](http://www.hotel-gradlon.com); 30 rue de Brest; s €101-119, d €109-135; ☺closed mid-Dec-mid-Jan; ☹) This place may not look like much from the street, but its rather bland and modern facade belies a charming country manor interior. The smallish but well-furnished rooms all have plenty of character and individual touches. It's a short walk from the old town and secure parking is available.

### Hôtel Kregenn

DESIGN HOTEL €€

(☎02 98 95 08 70; [www.hotel-kregenn.fr](http://www.hotel-kregenn.fr); 13 rue des Réguaies; s €105, d from €120, ste €150; ☹☹) A Zen timber-decked courtyard and a guest lounge with outsized mirrors and white leather sofas give you the initial impression that Quimper's coolest hotel is

contemporary in style, but the plush rooms (in pistachio green, ocean blue or chocolate) evoke a traditional feel, as does the warm-hearted welcome. Higher-priced rooms have air-con; two rooms are equipped for wheelchairs and free internet access by cable is available in each room.



### Hôtel Manoir des Indes

DESIGN HOTEL €€

(☎02 98 55 48 40; [www.manoir-hoteldesindes.com](http://www.manoir-hoteldesindes.com); 1 Allée de Prad ar C'hra; s €105-150, d €150-170, ste €180-260; ☹☹) This stunning hotel conversion just west of Quimper is a hugely impressive labour of love for a couple who have brought an old manor house back to life as a hotel with Indian decor, an homage to the original owner, one René Madec, who travelled the world before retiring here. The 10 rooms and four suites are all exquisitely furnished in a minimal and modern style, with Asian objets d'art and lots of exposed wood. The hotel is set within its own lovely 2-hectare grounds and is just a short drive from the centre of Quimper.

### Hôtel de la Gare

HOTEL €

(☎02 98 90 00 81; [www.hoteldelagarequimper.com](http://www.hoteldelagarequimper.com); 17 av de la Gare; s/d €49/54; ☹) This cheap and friendly place opposite the station is the best deal in town. The rooms are simple (those in the slightly older rooms in the annexe are even cheaper) and there's a very pleasant café feel to the lobby, plus free parking and a small courtyard garden to relax in.

### Hôtel Duplex

HOTEL €

(☎02 98 90 53 35; [www.hotel-duplex.com](http://www.hotel-duplex.com); 34 bd Duplex; s €66-112, d €79-112; ☺closed Christmas period; ☹) Rather overpriced given its unfurnished '70s style and ugly business complex building, the Duplex is nevertheless enviably located right on the river and has free secure parking, which can be a godsend in Quimper's crowded streets.

### Camping Municipal

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 98 98 89 24; av des Oiseaux; sites from €4.60; ☺tents Apr-Sep, campervans year-round) This wooded park is 1km west of the old city and 3km from the train station. From quai de l'Odé, follow rue Pont l'Abbé north-westwards and continue straight ahead where it veers left. Alternatively, take bus 1 from the train station to the Chaptal stop.

### Auberge de Jeunesse

HOSTEL €

(☎02 98 64 97 97; [www.fuaj.org/quimper](http://www.fuaj.org/quimper); 6 av des Oiseaux; camping €6, dm incl breakfast from €13, sheets €3; ☺Apr-Sep) Quimper's seasonal youth hostel has self-catering facilities.

## Quimper

### 📍 Top Sights

Cathédrale St-Corentin .....C3

### 📍 Sights

- 1 Jardin de la Retraite .....C1
- 2 Jardin de l'Évêché .....C3
- 3 Musée Départemental Breton .....C3
- 4 Musée des Beaux-Arts .....C2

### 🛏 Sleeping

- 5 Hôtel Duplex .....C3
- 6 Hôtel Gradlon .....D1
- 7 Hôtel Kregenn .....D3

### 🍴 Eating

- 8 Crêperie du Sucre-Salé .....B2
- 9 Crêperie la Krampouzerie .....B2
- 10 Halles St-François .....A3
- 11 L'Ambroisie .....C1
- 12 Le Cosy Restaurant .....B2
- 13 Le Petit Gâteau .....B2
- Ti Cass' de'Halles .....(see 10)

### 🛍 Shopping

- 14 Ar Bed Keltiek .....B3
- François Le Villec .....(see 14)
- 15 Galerie Ste-Catherine .....B4
- 16 Keltia Musique .....B2
- 17 Ty Blurt Records .....B4



## Eating & Drinking

As a bastion of Breton culture, Quimper has some exceptional crêperies. Rue du Froust near the cathedral has a couple of small pubs that attract a Breton-speaking clientele.



### Le Cosy Restaurant BRETON CUISINE €

(☎02 98 95 23 65; 2 rue du Sallé; mains €10-14.50; ☺lunch Tue-Sat, dinner Wed, Fri & Sat) *Pas de crêpes!* (No crêpes!) the blackboard menu on the street proclaims. Inside, make your way through the *épicerie* (specialist grocer) crammed with locally canned sardines, ciders and other Breton produce and up the narrow staircase to the eclectic, artistic dining room, where you can tuck in to specialties like gratins and *tartines* (open sandwiches) made from market ingredients. It's important to reserve for evening dining, as this place is fearfully popular.

### L'Ambroisie

GASTRONOMIC €€

(☎02 98 95 00 02; www.ambroisie-quimper.com; 49 rue Elie Fréron; menus €22-63; ☺lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Quimper's most celebrated gastronomic restaurant is sumptuously decorated with contemporary art and elegant china on snow-white tablecloths. Regional produce provided by chef Gilbert Guyon's friends is used in the creation of house specials like sole with new potatoes and caramelised onions. Cooking classes are available by request.

### Le Petit Gaveau

BISTRO €

(☎02 98 64 29 86; 16 rue des Boucheries; mains €8-15 ☺lunch Mon-Sat, dinner Wed-Sat) This charming find is a sleek conversion of an old stone-walled house that plays host to simple yet excellent food (the gourmet burger is superb), and is a world away from the fussy gastronomy and crêpes you'll find elsewhere in town. There's live jazz Thursday to Saturday (€3 supplement per diner). It's worth reserving in the evenings.

### Crêperie la Krampouzerie

CRÊPERIE €

(9 rue du Sallé; galettes €2-7; ☺closed Mon and lunch Sun) In an atmospheric space with blue-and-white-tiled wooden tables, crêpes and galettes are made from organic flours and regional ingredients like *algues d'Ouessant* (seaweed from the Île d'Ouessant), Roscoff onions and homemade ginger caramel. Tables fill the square outside in fine weather, giving it a street-party atmosphere.

### Crêperie du Sucré-Salé

CRÊPERIE €

(6 rue du Sallé; galettes €1.90-8; ☺Tue-Sat) For a quarter of a century, locals have crowded into this crêperie decorated with lace curtains, wooden dressers and painted plates on the walls. Breton specialties include *sau-cisse fumée* (smoked sausage) and the house speciality *forestière*, made with mushrooms, smoked lard (fatty bacon) and cheese.

### Self-Catering

The covered market **Halles St-François** in the old town has a slew of salad and sandwich options. One of the best, with a clutch of outdoor terrace tables, is **Ti Cass' de'Halles** (3 Halles St-François; dishes from €3.30; ☺10am-3pm Mon-Thu, 10am-7pm Fri & Sat).



## Entertainment

From mid-June to mid-September traditional Breton music and dance takes place in the **Jardin de l'Évêché** (admission €5; ☺9pm Thu).

Check posters and leaflets pasted up around town or ask the tourist office for times and venues of a local *fest-noz* (night festival). On average there's one in or near Quimper every couple of weeks.



## Shopping

### François Le Villec

POTTERY

(4 rue du Roi Gradlon) Several shops in the old town sell Quimper's traditional faience pottery, including this one.

### Keltia Musique

MUSIC & BOOKS

(1 place au Beurre) Breton and Celtic music and art are available at Keltia Musique, which carries an excellent range of books and CDs.

### Ar Bed Keltiek

BOOKS

(Celtic World; 2 rue du Roi Gradlon) A great range of books on everything Breton.

### Ty Blurt Records

MUSIC

(7 rue Ste-Catherine; ☺2-7pm Mon-Sat) For a total change of tune, flip through '70s pop, French punk and rock vinyl.

### Galerie Ste-Catherine

ART

(13 rue Ste-Catherine; ☺11am-12.30pm & 2.30-7pm Tue-Sat) A few doors up from Ty Blurt Records, you can check out traditional and contemporary art on sale here.



## Information

**Main post office** (bd Amiral de Kerguelen)

**Médiathèque des Ursulines** (10 rue de Falkirk; ☺12.30-7pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) One hour's

daily free use of the internet is available to all comers at this swanky new media centre.

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 53 04 05; [www.quimper-tourisme.com](http://www.quimper-tourisme.com); place de la Résistance; ☎9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-6.30pm) Runs weekly 1½-hour guided city tours in English (€5.20) in July and August, and sells the Pass' Quimper (€10) whereby two people can access four attractions or tours of their choosing (from a list of participating organisations).

## Getting There & Away

**BUS CAT/Viaoo** ([www.viaoo29.fr](http://www.viaoo29.fr)) has regular buses to Brest (€6.50, 1¼ hours). **Le Coeur** (☎02 98 54 40 15) runs buses to Concarneau (€2, 45 minutes, seven to 10 daily); three buses that depart daily continue to Quimperlé (€2, 1½ hours).

**CAR** Rental agencies have offices outside the train station:

**ADA** (☎02 98 52 10 65)

**Avis** (☎02 98 90 31 34)

**Europcar** (☎02 98 90 00 68)

**TRAIN** Frequent services:

**Brest** €15.50, 1¼ hours, up to 10 daily

**Paris Montparnasse** €75, 4¾ hours, hourly

**Rennes** €32, 2½ hours, hourly

**Vannes** €18, 1½ hours, hourly

## Getting Around

**BICYCLE Torch VTT** (☎02 98 53 84 41; [www.torchvttquimper.com](http://www.torchvttquimper.com); 58 rue de la Providence) rents out mountain bikes for €18 per day. The friendly owner is a fount of information about local cycle routes.

**BUS QUB** ([www.qub.fr](http://www.qub.fr); 2 quai de l'Odet), the Quimper bus network, has an information office opposite the tourist office; a single/day ticket costs €1/3.

**TAXI** Call ☎02 98 90 21 21.

## Concarneau

POP 21,000

The sheltered harbour of Concarneau (Konk-Kerne in Breton), 24km southeast of Quimper, radiates out from its trawler port, which brings in close to 200,000 tonnes of *thon* (tuna) from the Indian Ocean and off the African coast (the adjacent Atlantic's too cold). Jutting out into the port, the old town, Ville Close, is circled by medieval walls.

## Sights

The **walled town**, fortified in the 14th century and modified by Vauban two centuries

later, huddles on a small island linked to place Jean Jaurès by a footbridge.

### Maison du Patrimoine

CITY MUSEUM

(☎02 98 60 76 06; admission €1) Between 15 June and 15 September, the walled town can also be accessed through this old house, which has exhibits on the town's history – ask for an English-language brochure. Once you're within the walls, rue Vauban and place St-Guénolé outside are enchanting for their old stone houses converted into shops, restaurants and galleries.

### Musée de la Pêche

MARITIME MUSEUM

(Fisheries Museum; ☎02 98 97 10 20; [www.musee.delapeche.eu](http://www.musee.delapeche.eu); 3 rue Vauban; adult/child €6/4; ☎9.30am-8pm, closed Jan) Concarneau's seafaring traditions, offshore fishing trawlers, model ships and fishing exhibits feature at the ever-popular Musée de la Pêche, in the middle of the walled town.

### Marinarium

AQUARIUM

(☎02 98 50 81 64; [www.mnhn.fr/concarneau](http://www.mnhn.fr/concarneau); place de la Croix; adult/child €5/3; ☎10am-noon & 2-6pm) Founded in 1859, the Concarneau Marinarium is the world's oldest institute of marine biology. Alongside its 10 aquariums are exhibits on oceanography and marine flora and fauna.

### Château de Kerioulet

CHÂTEAU

(☎02 98 97 36 50; [www.chateaudekeriolet.com](http://www.chateaudekeriolet.com); adult/child €5/3; ☎10.30am-1pm & 2-6pm Sun-Fri, 10.30am-1pm Sat Jun-Sep, by reservation Easter-May) This impressive building is an exquisite example of 19th-century architecture. Its intriguing Russian connections are revealed during a guided tour. The castle is a well-signed five-minute drive from town (turn right just before the large Leclerc supermarket).



## Activities

### Walking & Cycling

WALKING & CYCLING

The tourist office sells two excellent guides: *Balades au Pays des Portes de Cornouaille* (€2.50; in French), describing 18 walks around Concarneau; and *VTT de Cornouaille* (€3.50), outlining 39 cycling circuits.

### Vedettes Glenn

BOAT TRIPS

(☎02 98 97 10 31; [www.vedettes-glenn.fr](http://www.vedettes-glenn.fr); 17 av du Dr Nicolas) In July and August four-hour river trips (adult/child €27/13, sailing 2.15pm Tuesday to Friday and Sunday) sail from Concarneau along the gorgeously scenic estuary of the River Odet. Boat trips also

## CONCARNEAU BEACHES

**Plage des Sables Blancs** is on Baie de la Forêt, 1.5km northwest of the town centre; take bus 2, northbound, from the tourist office. For **Plage du Cabellou**, 5km south of town, take bus 2, southbound.

operate to the Îles de Glénan – a cluster of nine little islands about 20km south of Concarneau – starting at €26/13.



### Sleeping

#### Hôtel des Halles

FAMILY HOTEL €

(☎02 98 97 11 41; [www.hoteldeshalles.com](http://www.hoteldeshalles.com); place de l'Hôtel de Ville; s €49-84, d €64-80; ☎) A few steps from Ville Close, this 22-room hotel looks plain on the outside but its renovated rooms come in a rainbow of colour combinations like pistachio green and hot pink, with lavender trimmings throughout the public areas (even the lift doors). The all-organic breakfast (€9) includes homemade jams and bread straight from the oven. Broadband internet's free through cables in each room and the family owners are ultrahelpful.

#### Les Sables Blancs

BOULIQUE HOTEL €€

(☎02 98 50 10 12; [www.hotel-les-sables-blancs.com](http://www.hotel-les-sables-blancs.com); place des Sables Blancs; s €115-160, d €130-195, ste €260-370; ☎) Right on the 'white sands' of the beach from which it takes its name, this ultrachic hotel has spacious rooms and an excellent restaurant, with good deals on half-board.

#### Auberge de Jeunesse Éthic Étapes

HOSTEL €

(☎02 98 97 03 47; [www.ajconcarneau.com](http://www.ajconcarneau.com); quai de la Croix; dm incl breakfast €15.50) Fall asleep listening to the waves at this welcoming waterfront hostel next to the Marinarium. Extras include a wraparound barbecue terrace, a self-catering kitchen and pastries for breakfast.

#### Camping Moulin d'Aurore

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 98 50 53 08; [www.moulinaurore.com](http://www.moulinaurore.com), in French; 49 rue de Trégunc; site & car for 2 adults €16; ☎Apr-Sep) Facilities at this campground 600m southeast of the harbour and a mere 50m from the sea include a bar/TV room and a laundry. Take bus 1 or 2 to Le Rouz stop from the tourist office or the ferry from Ville Close, then walk southeast along rue Mauduit Duplessis.



### Eating

Cafés, pizzerias and crêperies line the waterfront, and there are more inside the walls of Ville Close.

#### La Porte au Vin

BRETON CUISINE €€

(☎02 98 97 38 11; 9 place St-Guénolé; menus €18-25; ☎Apr-Oct) Highly recommended, this place in the centre of the walled city is a lovely spot in fine weather, with a pretty patio terrace shaded by a red awning. It's consistently strong on traditional cooking (which in Concarneau means fish), as well as its excellent crêpes.

#### La Verrière

TAPAS €

(☎02 98 60 55 78; 3 rue des Halles; menus €10-25; ☎closed Mon in winter) Barbecued fish is the speciality of Concarneau's hippest hang-out, set around a covered courtyard garden. You can also drop by for tapas or just a drink and take advantage of the free wi-fi.

#### La Croisière

SEAFOOD €€

(☎02 98 97 01 87; 11 av du Dr Nicolas; menus €22-34; ☎lunch Tue-Fri & Sun, dinner Tue-Sat, daily in summer) Just back from the boat-filled marina, the lively La Croisière is a local fave for its seafood straight off the boat.

### Self-Catering

There's a **covered market** (☎9am-noon Tue-Sun) on place Jean Jaurès and a busy open-air market in the same square on Monday and Friday mornings.

Enticing *bisquitieries* within Ville Close include **La Torchette** (☎02 98 60 46 87; 9 rue Vauban; ☎10.30am-6.30pm), with chocolate sculptures and Breton biscuits by the bucketful.



### Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 98 97 01 44; [www.tourismeconcarneau.fr](http://www.tourismeconcarneau.fr); quai d'Aiguillon; ☎9am-7pm)



### Getting There & Away

**BICYCLE Vedettes Glenn** (☎02 98 97 10 31; [www.vedettes-glenn.fr](http://www.vedettes-glenn.fr); 17 av du Docteur Nicolas; per day €10)

**BOAT** A small **passenger ferry** (fare €0.80; ☎8am-11pm Jul-Aug, 8am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-12.30pm & 2-6.30pm Sun Sep-Jun) links Ville Close with place Duquesne on the eastern side of the harbour.

**BUS L'Été Évasion** (☎02 98 56 82 82; [www.autocars-ete.com](http://www.autocars-ete.com)) runs up to 10 buses daily between Quimper and Quimperlé, calling by Concarneau (€2 from Quimper).

**TAXI** Call ☎02 98 97 10 93 or ☎02 98 50 70 50.



## MORBIHAN COAST

In the crook of Brittany's southern coastline, the Golfe du Morbihan (Morbihan Coast) is a haven of islands, oyster beds and bird life. But the area is perhaps best known for its proliferation of mystifying Celtic megaliths, which are strewn throughout most of the *département*.

### Carnac

POP 4580

Predating Stonehenge by around 100 years, Carnac (Garnag in Breton) also tops it with sheer numbers, making this the world's greatest concentration of megalithic sites. There are no fewer than 3000 of these upright stones, most around thigh-high, erected between 5000 and 3500 BC.

Carnac, some 32km west of Vannes, comprises the old stone village Carnac-Ville and the seaside resort of Carnac-Plage, 1.5km south, bordered by the 2km-long sandy

beach. Its megaliths stretch 13km north from Carnac-Ville and east as far as the village of Locmariaquer.

### Sleeping & Eating

#### Camping des Menhirs

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 97 52 94 67; [www.lesmenhirs.com](http://www.lesmenhirs.com); 7 allée St-Michel, Carnac-Plage; adult/site/electricity €8/29/4; ☀May-late Sep; 🏠🚻) Carnac and its surrounds have over 15 camping grounds, including this luxury complex of 100-sq-metre sites. Just 300m north of the beach, this is very much the glamorous end of camping with amenities such as a sauna and cocktail bar!

#### Auberge Le Ratelier

B&B €

(☎02 97 52 05 04; [www.le-ratelier.com](http://www.le-ratelier.com); 4 Chemin du Douet, Carnac-Ville; d €52-62; ☀Feb-Dec) This vine-clambered former farmhouse, now an eight-room inn with low ceilings and traditional timber furnishings, is in a quiet street one block southwest of place de l'Église. The cheapest rooms have showers only and shared toilets. Lunch and dinner

### PONT-AVEN

Once the railway was pushed through in the 19th century, the tiny Breton village of Pont-Aven (population 3000), nestled in the 'valley of willows', was discovered by artists. American painters were among the first to uncover it, but things really took off when France's Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard set up a colony here in the 1850s. Their work, and that of their disciples, morphed into a movement known today as the Pont-Aven School.

There is some debate in artistic and sociological circles as to whether these works folklorised the local Breton people, but they certainly captured the beauty of the little village and the surrounding countryside. For an insight into the town's place in art history, stop by the **Musée des Beaux-Arts de Pont-Aven** (☎02 98 06 14 43; [www.museepontaven.fr](http://www.museepontaven.fr); place de l'Hôtel de Ville; adult/child €4.50/2.50; ☀10.30am-12.30pm & 2pm-6.30pm, closed Jan). And to see the spots where the masters set up their easels, pick up a free walking-trail map from the nearby **tourist office** (☎02 98 06 04 70; place de l'Hôtel de Ville; ☀9.30am-7.30pm), which can also help with accommodation if you want to spend the night.

Charming spots for a drink or a meal include the bar-restaurant **Auberge de la Fleur d'Ajonc** (☎02 98 06 10 65; place de l'Hôtel de Ville; menus €16-23; ☀lunch Tue-Sun, daily Jul-Aug), in an atmospheric medieval building of sloping stone floors and low ceilings held up by hefty beams; and **Le Moulin de Rosmadec** (☎02 98 06 00 22; [www.moulinderosmadec.com](http://www.moulinderosmadec.com); menus €28-76; ☀lunch Tue-Wed & Fri-Sun, dinner Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, closed Feb & Oct), serving gastronomic fare overlooking the town's namesake *pont* (bridge) and *aven* (river in Breton). Le Moulin de Rosmadec also has four delightful guestrooms upstairs (doubles €90, apartment €120).

Since the 1960s Pont-Aven has again become a magnet for artists, with no fewer than 60 galleries here in summer. Even in winter, you'll still find around 20 galleries open on weekends.

Pont-Aven is an easy 18km drive southeast of Concarneau. **Buses** (☎02 98 44 46 73; €2) – five Monday to Saturday and two on Sunday – connect Pont-Aven with Quimper in the east (30 minutes), Concarneau (30 minutes) and Quimper (one hour).



## Morbihan Coast

0 5 km  
0 3 miles



*menus* (€21 to €46) at its whitewashed, wood-beamed restaurant (closed Wednesday October to December and from February to April) revolve around fresh seafood, particularly lobster.

**Crêperie au Pressoir** CRÊPERIE €  
(☎02 97 52 01 86; village du Ménéac; galettes €3-7; ☺Easter-Sep) Opening hours fluctuate, so we recommend checking ahead, but this artisan crêperie in a traditional long Breton house is a rare opportunity to dine right in the middle of a 70-strong cromlech (circle of menhirs). From Carnac-Ville, take rue St-Cornély northwest and turn right on rue du Ménéac and follow it north for about 1km.

**Crêperie St-George** CRÊPERIE €  
(☎02 97 52 18 34; 8 allée du Parc, Carnac-Plage; menu €10; ☺Apr-Sep) For consistently great-value crêpes close to the beach, try the contemporary Crêperie St-George in the Galeries St-George centre.



## Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 97 52 13 52; www.ot-carnac.fr; 74 av des Druides, Carnac-Plage; ☺9am-7pm Mon-Sat & 3-7pm Sun)



## Getting There & Away

**BICYCLE** Hire bikes from **Lorcy** (☎02 97 52 09 73; 6 rue de Courdiec, Carnac-Ville; per half-/full day €5.50/9.50) or the pricier **Le Randonneur** (☎02 97 52 02 55; 20 av des Druides, Carnac-Plage; per half-/full day €8/11).

**BUS** The main bus stops are in Carnac-Ville, outside the police station on rue St-Cornély, and in Carnac-Plage, beside the tourist office. **Keolis Atlantique** (☎02 97 47 29 64; www.keolis-atlantique.com) runs a daily bus to Auray, Vannes and Quiberon (€2).

**TAXI** Call ☎02 97 52 75 75.

**TRAIN** The nearest useful train station is in Auray, 12km to the northeast. SNCF has an office in the Carnac-Plage tourist office where you can buy advance tickets.

## Quiberon

POP 5200

Quiberon (Kiberen in Breton) sits at the southern tip of a sliver-thin, 14km-long peninsula flanked on the western side by the rocky, wave-lashed Côte Sauvage (Wild Coast). The town fans out around the port where ferries depart for Belle Île, and is wildly popular in summer.

## CELTIC FESTIVAL

Celtic communities from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Galicia in northwest Spain congregate with Bretons at the **Festival Interceltique de Lorient** (☎02 97 21 24 29; www.festival-interceltique.com, in French & Breton) over 10 days in early August. Upwards of 600,000 people descend on the city of Lorient, about 30km northwest of Carnac, so book well ahead if you're planning to stay in town for the festival.



## Sights & Activities



### Conserverie La Belle-Iloise

SARDINE CANNERY

(☎02 97 50 08 77; www.labelleiloise.fr; rue de Kerné; ☺10-11am & 3-4pm Mon-Fri) North of the train station, guided visits around this former sardine cannery run hourly in summer, with bargain-priced sardines available from the adjacent shop.

### La Grande Plage

BEACH

La Grand Plage is a family-friendly beach, with bathing spots towards the peninsula's tip larger and less crowded. The **Côte Sauvage** on the opposite coast is great for a windy walk, but you'll need a permit for any nautically based activity (such as a diving certificate) or risk a fine – and your safety.



## Sleeping

### Camping du Conguel

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 97 50 19 11; www.campingduconguel.com; bd de la Teignouse; sites €27-44, electricity €4; ☺Apr-Oct; ☹) This splashy option, with an aqua park including water slides, is one of the peninsula's 15 campgrounds. Just 2km east of the town centre, it's beside Plage du Conguel, with four- to six-berth cabins starting at €94 for two nights.

### Auberge de Jeunesse – Les Filets Bleus

HOSTEL €

(☎02 97 50 15 54; www.fuaj.org; 45 rue du Roch Priol; dm €11; ☺Apr-Sep) Quiberon's HI-affiliated hostel is in a peaceful part of town, 800m east of the train station and 500m from the beach. There's limited camping (€6) in the grounds; breakfast costs €3.50.

### Hôtel L'Océan

HOTEL €

(☎02 97 50 07 58; www.hotel-de-locean.com, in French; 7 quai de l'Océan; d €55-74, tw €71-82;

☺Easter-Sep; ☺) Overlooking the harbour and a small beach, this huge white house with multicoloured shutters is something of a local landmark. The cheapest of its 37 rooms don't have TVs, but rooms at the other end of the price scale get you a fabulous harbour view. Parking (very welcome in summer) costs €7.



## Eating & Drinking



### Villa Margot

SEAFOOD €€

(☎02 97 50 33 89; [www.villamargot.fr](http://www.villamargot.fr);

7 rue de Port Maria; menus €18-38; ☺Thu-Mon)  
The interior of this stunning stone res-

taurant looks like it'd be at home in a chic Parisian *quartier*, with original art on the walls (painted on adjacent Belle Île), flower-shaped opaque glass light fittings, hot-pink and brown colour schemes, and lobsters clawing in the live tank (caught the night before, along with the fish). That is until you head out onto the timber deck, which has direct access to the beach for a post-repast stroll.

### Le Café de Maria

TAPAS BAR €

(☎02 97 50 53 89; 8 rue de Krevozes; mains €12-20) This brand-new, super-slick tapas place, café and wine bar is a marked de-

## MORBIHAN'S MIGHTY MEGALITHS

Two perplexing questions arise from the Morbihan region's Neolithic menhirs, dolmens, cromlechs, tumuli and cairns. Just *how* did the original constructors hew then haul these blocks (the heaviest weighs 300 tonnes), millennia before the wheel and the mechanical engine reached Brittany? And *why*?

Theories and hypotheses abound, but the vague yet common consensus is that they served some kind of sacred purpose – the same spiritual impulse behind so many monuments built by humankind.

The best way to appreciate the stones' sheer numbers is to walk or bike between the Le Ménéac and Kerlescan groups, with menhirs almost continuously in view. Between June and September seven buses a day run between the two sites and both Carnac-Ville and Carnac-Plage.

Sign up for a one-hour guided visit at the **Maison des Mégalithes** (☎02 97 52 29 81; rte des Alignements; €4; ☺9am-7pm), running regularly in French year-round and usually in English at 3pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from early July to late August. Because of severe erosion, the sites are fenced off to allow the vegetation to regenerate. However, between 10am and 5pm from October to May you can wander freely through parts (ask at the Maison des Mégalithes for updates).

Opposite the Maison des Mégalithes, the largest menhir field – with 1099 stones – is the **Alignements du Ménéac**, 1km north of Carnac-Ville; the eastern section is accessible in winter. From here, the D196 heads northeast for about 1.5km to the equally impressive **Alignements de Kermario**. Climb the stone observation tower midway along the site to see the alignment from above. Another 500m further on are the **Alignements de Kerlescan**, a smaller grouping also accessible in winter.

**Tumulus St-Michel**, at the end of rue du Tumulus and 400m northeast of the Carnac-Ville tourist office, dates back to at least 5000 BC and offers sweeping views.

Between Kermario and Kerlescan, 500m to the south of the D196, deposit your fee in an honour box at **Tumulus de Kercado** (admission €1), dating from 3800 BC and the burial site of a Neolithic chieftain. From the parking area 300m further along the D196, a 15-minute walk brings you to the **Géant du Manio**, the highest menhir in the complex.

Near Locmariaquer, 13km southeast of Carnac-Ville, the major monuments are the **Table des Marchands**, a 30m-long dolmen, and the **Grand Menhir Brisé** (adult/child €5/free; ☺10am-6pm), the region's largest menhir, which once stood 20m high but now lies broken on its side. Both are off the D781, just before the village. Just south of Locmariaquer by the sea is the **Dolmen des Pierres Plates**, a 24m-long chamber with still-visible engravings.

For some background, the **Musée de Préhistoire** (☎02 97 52 22 04; 10 place de la Chapelle, Carnac-Ville; adult/child €5/2.50; ☺10am-6pm) chronicles life in and around Carnac from the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras to the Middle Ages.

parture from the bucket-and-spade eateries along the seafront. It offers a selection of imaginative tapas dishes as well as more substantial mains such as grilled salmon steaks, scallops and sea bream. Add a great wine list, and this is one of Quiberon's best choices.

### L'Embarcadère

SEAFOOD €€

(☎02 97 50 17 84; 2 quai de l'Océan; mussels from €8, mains €15-19; ☎7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-9pm Sun) Of the bar-restaurants lined up along the quayfront, L'Embarcadère offers value that's hard to beat. It also serves whopping bowls of *moules frites*, and mixes a great kir.



### Information

**Tourist office** (☎08 25 13 56 00; www.quiberon.com; 14 rue de Verdun; ☎9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat) Between the train station and La Grande Plage.



### Getting There & Away

**BOAT** For ferries between Quiberon and Belle-Île, see p268.

**BUS** Quiberon is connected by **Keolis Atlantique** (☎02 97 47 29 64; www.keolis-atlantique.com), with one bus per day leaving at 1.45pm and serving Carnac (45 minutes), Auray (1¼ hours) and Vannes (1¼ hours). The flat fare is €2. Buses stop at the train station and at place Hoche near the tourist office and the beach.

**CAR** High-summer traffic is hellish – consider leaving your vehicle at the 1200-place Sémaphore car park (€3.60 for up to four hours, €12.50 for 24 hours), 1.5km north of the beach, and walking or taking the free shuttle bus into town.

**TRAIN** In July and August only, a train runs several times a day between Auray and Quiberon (€5.50, 45 minutes). From September to June an SNCF bus service links Quiberon and Auray train stations (€2, 50 minutes) at least seven times a day.



### Getting Around

**BICYCLE Cycles Loisirs** (☎02 97 50 31 73; www.cyclesloisirs.free.fr; 3 rue Victor Golvan), 200m north of the tourist office, rents touring/mountain bikes from €11/13 per day. **Cyclomar** (☎02 97 50 26 00; www.cyclomar.fr; 47 place Hoche), around 200m south of the tourist office, rents out bikes for similar prices as well as scooters including helmet from €38 per day plus insurance. It also runs an operation from the train station during July and August.

**TAXI** Call ☎08 00 85 20 20.

## Belle Île

POP 5200

Accessed by ferries from Quiberon, Belle Île (in full, Belle-Île-en-Mer) sees its population swell tenfold in summer thanks to its namesake beauty. But as it's Brittany's largest island (at 20km by 9km), there's room to escape the crowds.



### Sights & Activities

#### Musée Historique

HISTORY MUSEUM

(☎02 97 31 85 54; www.citadellevauban.com; adult/child €6.50/3.50; ☎9am-6pm) The dramatic citadel, strengthened by Vauban in 1682, dominates the little Le Palais port. Inside, the various displays concentrate on the history of the island's defensive system, though there are also interesting sections on the various celebrities who were regular visitors here, the local fish trade and island life.

#### Grotte de l'Apothicaire

WALKS

Belle Île's fretted southwestern coast has spectacular rock formations and caves including Grotte de l'Apothicaire (Cave of the Apothecary's Shop), where waves roll in from two sides.

#### Beaches & Swimming

BEACHES

**Plage de Donnant** has awesome surf, though swimming here is dangerous. Sheltered **Port Kérel**, to the southwest, is better for children, as is the 2km-long **Plage des Grands Sables**, the biggest and busiest strand, spanning the calm waters of the island's eastern side.

#### Walking & Cycling

WALKING &amp; CYCLING

The tourist office sells walking and cycling guides. The ultimate hike is the 95km **coastal path** that follows the island's coastline.



### Sleeping & Eating

#### Citadelle Vauban Hôtel Musée

HISTORIC HOTEL €€

(☎02 97 31 84 17; www.citadellevauban.com; Le Palais; r €145-295, ste €355-500; ☎closed mid-Oct-May; ☎) Definitely the best hotel on the island, this fantastic conversion within the historic citadel is Belle Île's top address and boasts 53 stunning rooms with antique furniture and stylish trimmings. Note that there's only wi-fi access in the lobby.

#### Auberge de Jeunesse Haute Boulogne

HOSTEL €

(☎02 97 31 81 33; www.fuaj.org; Haute Boulogne; dm incl sheets & breakfast €13.50; ☎closed Oct;

## TREETOP SLEEPING

For the ultimate eco-escape, the only way you can go past **Dihan** (☎02 97 56 88 27; [www.dihan-evasion.org](http://www.dihan-evasion.org), in French; Kerganiet, Ploëmel; d guestroom/yurt incl breakfast €60/80, d tree house €120-140, table d'hôte from €25; 🍴) is in the literal sense, secluded as it is in a leafy dell just outside Ploëmel (follow the black signs from the village).

Run by a fun-loving young couple, Myriam and Arno Le Masle, in its former life the property was Myriam's grandparents' working farm. The farmhouse and barns now house guestrooms, while the grounds shelter two yurts imported from Mongolia and five tree houses, reached by climbing ladders (the highest – at 12m – requires you to strap on a harness to reach it). Should nature call, there are biodegradable dry toilets up here as well as conserved water (you'll find brightly tiled bathrooms and a sauna in the reception building).

Rates include breakfast, which is a combination of organic, fair-trade and local artisan produce, such as a finger-licking *caramel au beurre salé* (Breton caramel spread). Eco-initiatives also include rare-for-France recycling. Fabulous *tables d'hôte* (a combination of Myriam's Breton, Mauritian and Indian heritage; by reservation) take place in the converted *cidrerie*, where pianist Arno hits the keys and bands sometimes drop by. Otherwise, guests can fire up the barbecue and dine beneath a bamboo-sheltered pergola.

All of which would be enough to recommend it heartily, but you can also rent bikes (€10 per day), book a massage (from €80) or even an on-site beauty treatment with biological cosmetics. Both guests and nonguests can saddle up, with horse riding starting at €20 per hour (there are also ponies for kids).

📍 This modern 96-bed HI-affiliated hostel with a self-catering kitchen is to the north of the citadel. Its rooms are all twins with bunkbeds and shared toilets.

**Hôtel Vauban**

HOTEL €

(☎02 97 31 45 42; [www.hotelvauban.com](http://www.hotelvauban.com), in French; 1 rue des Ramparts, Le Palais; s €50, d €66-85; ☹Mar-mid-Nov; 🍴) This comfy place is perched high on the coastal path, with views of the ferry landing below from many of its 16 spacious rooms. The hotel rents out mountain bikes, there's good wheelchair access and the guest-only restaurant (*menus* from €20) serves seafood from April to September.

**La Table du Gouverneur**

GASTRONOMIC €€

(☎02 97 31 82 57; [www.citadellevauban.com](http://www.citadellevauban.com); Le Palais; menus €25-60; ☹closed mid-Oct-May) You may literally eat off the governor's table here, given that this hugely atmospheric and formal place is housed in his former residence. The gastronomic *menus* are heavily focused on seafood, inventively combining flavours as disparate as lobster, grapefruit and celery to sublime effect.

**Information**

Turn left as you leave the ferry in Le Palais to get to the **tourist office** (☎02 97 31 81 93;

[www.belle-ile.com](http://www.belle-ile.com); quai Bonnelle, Le Palais;

☎8.45am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun). There's a summer-only **information kiosk** (☎02 97 31 69 49; ☹Easter-Sep) on the quay in Sauzon.

**Getting There & Away**

**BOAT** Travelling to Belle Île can involve a bit of planning, as taking a car on the ferry is prohibitively expensive for a short trip and needs to be booked well ahead, even outside peak season. On the upside, bikes can be carried free on board ferries.

The shortest crossing to Belle Île is from Quiberon. **Compagnie Océane** (☎08 20 05 61 56; [www.compagnie-oceane.fr](http://www.compagnie-oceane.fr)) operates car/passenger ferries (45 minutes, year-round) and fast passenger ferries to Le Palais and Sauzon in July and August. An adult return passenger fare is €30; transporting a small car costs a hefty €149 return *plus* passenger fares. There are five crossings a day (up to 13 in July and August).

It is also possible to make the trip from Vannes. **Navix** (☎02 97 46 60 29; [www.navix.fr](http://www.navix.fr), in French with English sections) operates ferries (return €30 to €44) between May and mid-September.

**Getting Around**

**BICYCLE** Lots of places in Le Palais rent out bicycles/motor scooters for around €12/35 per day.



**BUS** Seasonal buses run by **Taol Mor** (☎02 97 31 32 32; [www.cars-verts.com/taolmor.html](http://www.cars-verts.com/taolmor.html)) criss-cross the island.

**CAR** Car-rental rates on the island are expensive and start at about €70 for 24 hours; you'll find outlets at the harbour as you disembark.

## Vannes

POP 55,400

Street art, sculptures and intriguing galleries pop up unexpectedly through the half-timbered, cobbled city of Vannes (Gwened in Breton), which has a quirky, creative bent.

The city's integral role in Brittany's history stretches back to pre-Roman times, when it was the capital of the Veneti, a Gaulish tribe of sailors who fortified the town. Conquered by Julius Caesar in the 1st century BC, it became the centre of Breton unity in the 9th century under Breton hero Nominoë, and in 1532 the union of the duchy of Brittany with France was proclaimed here. These days it's a vibrant hub for students attending the city's Université de Bretagne-Sud.

### Sights

Surrounding Vannes' walled old town is a flower-filled moat. Inside, you can weave through the web of narrow alleys ranged around the 13th-century Gothic **Cathédrale St-Pierre**. Tucked away behind rue des Vierges, stairs lead to the accessible section of the **ramparts**. From here, you can see the black-roofed **Vieux Lavoires** (Old Laundry Houses), though you'll get a better view from the **Tour du Connétable** or from the **Porte Poterne** to the south.

### Musée de la Cohue

ART MUSEUM

(☎02 97 01 63 00; 9-15 place St-Pierre; adult/child €4.30/free; ☉9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Since the 14th century, the building now housing the Musée de la Cohue has variously been a produce market, a law court and the seat of the Breton parliament. Today it's a museum of fine arts, displaying mostly 19th-century paintings, sculptures and engravings.

### Musée d'Histoire et d'Archéologie

HISTORY MUSEUM

(☎02 97 01 63 00; 2 rue Noë; adult/child €4.30/free; ☉10am-6pm) In the summer months you can survey Roman and Greek artefacts and study up on megaliths at this museum, housed in the 15th-century Château Gail-

lard. A combined ticket for the two museums costs €6/4 per adult/child.

### Tours

#### Navix

BOAT TOURS

(☎08 25 13 21 00; [www.navix.fr](http://www.navix.fr), in French) From April to September, Navix runs a range of cruises on the Golfe du Morbihan (Morbihan Coast), departing from the Gare Maritime, 2km south of the tourist office. It's also possible to visit the two largest of the gulf's 40 inhabited islands, Île aux Moines and Île d'Arz.

#### Compagnie des Îles

BOAT TOURS

(☎08 25 13 41 00; [www.compagniedesiles.com](http://www.compagniedesiles.com), in French) Offers seasonal gulf cruises.

### Festivals & Events

#### Festival de Jazz

JAZZ FESTIVAL

Vannes swings for four days in late July or early August.

#### Les Musicales du Golfe

MUSIC FESTIVAL

([www.musicalesdugolfe.com](http://www.musicalesdugolfe.com)) Classical music concerts take place in early August.

#### Fêtes d'Arvor

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

([www.fetes-arvor.org](http://www.fetes-arvor.org)) This three-day celebration of Breton culture from 13 to 15 August includes parades, concerts and *festoù-noz* (night festivals).

### Sleeping

#### Hôtel Villa Kerasy

HISTORIC HOTEL €€

(☎02 97 68 36 83; [www.villakerasy.com](http://www.villakerasy.com); 20 av Favrel-et-Lincy; d €120-210; ☉closed mid-Nov–mid-Dec; ☎) Each of the 12 elegant rooms in this grand villa is themed on historic ports of the East India trading route. In summer enjoy the tranquil garden, designed by a Japanese landscape artist. In winter relax in the cosy tearoom, where you can sip Earl Grey from fine Limoges china by the log fire.

#### Hôtel Le Marina

HOTEL €

(☎02 97 47 22 81; [www.hotellemarina.fr](http://www.hotellemarina.fr); 4 place Gambetta; s €38-57, d €41-61; ☎) By far the best-located place in town, this friendly hotel is run by the same team operating the busy downstairs café. There are 14 simple and rather cramped rooms here in creams and pink, the cheapest of which have facilities in the corridor.

#### Le Branhoc

FAMILY HOTEL €

(☎02 97 56 41 55; [www.hotel-auray.fr](http://www.hotel-auray.fr); 5 rte du Bono, Auray; s €57, d €47-69; ☎☎) Situated 17km west of Vannes, just outside the pretty riverside town of Auray (itself well worth a

wander), this peacefully situated, family-run hotel is a handy base for exploring both Vannes and Morbihan's megalithic sites. Rooms are bright, spacious and spotlessly clean.

### Hôtel Le Richemont

HOTEL €

(02 97 47 17 24; [www.hotel-richemont-vannes.com](http://www.hotel-richemont-vannes.com); 26 place de la Gare; d €55-65; ☎) If the heavy wood beams and arched stonework of the mock-medieval breakfast room aren't your cup of tea, you can have a laden tray brought to your very comfortable, sound-proofed and much more contemporary room.

### Relais du Golfe

HOTEL €

(02 97 47 14 74; 10 place du Général de Gaulle; r €40-56) Its name suggests something more flash than these rooms (wedged above a café-bar) actually are, but it's a cheap and central option, and staff are welcoming. The cheapest rooms come with just a sink and share toilets.



## Eating & Drinking

Rue des Halles and its offshoots are lined with tempting eateries; classical and contemporary brasseries are around the port.

### Dan Ewen

CRÊPERIE €

(02 97 42 44 34; 3 place du Général de Gaulle; crêpes €3-8; ☎ Mon-Sat) A near-life-size statue of a sweet, smiling, wrinkled Breton lady bearing a tray greets you at the entrance of this stone and dark-wood crêperie serving fillings such as frangipane, and flambéed options topped with *crème Chantilly*.

### Délice Café

BISTRO €

(02 97 54 23 31; 7 place des Lices; dishes €6-12; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) Fronted by a timber-decked terrace (warmed by heat lamps in winter), and flowing to a contemporary dining room of gilded mirrors and red velvet banquettes, this smart place in the centre of the old town has healthy salads and hot dishes like *croques monsieur* (grilled ham-and-cheese sandwiches). Terrace dining costs roughly 10% more.

### Côte et Saveurs

MODERN FRENCH €

(02 97 47 21 94; 8 rue Pierre-René Rogues; mains €8-18; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Mon, lunch Tue) A spiral staircase winds through the centre of the ground-floor dining room to the upper level of this airy, contemporary restaurant serving dishes such as *magret de canard* in rhubarb sauce.

## Brasserie des Halles et des Arts

BRASSERIE €€

(02 97 54 08 34; 9 rue des Halles; menus €15-25; ☎ noon-midnight) You can eat at this buzzing brasserie (mains €9.50 to €18), but it's an equally good spot for a drink while browsing the art – such as the Breton images made from tiles that adorn its colourful walls.

### A Tribord

DJ BAR

(02 97 42 76 94; [www.atribord-vannes.com](http://www.atribord-vannes.com); 28 rue St-Patern; ☎ 6pm-2am) Everything from folk music to club nights with DJs hitting the decks takes place at this eclectic venue. You'll find a couple of other bars in the same street.



## Shopping

In keeping with Vannes' artistic spirit, galleries such as **Echoppe St-Guénaël** (02 97 47 92 37; 29 rue St-Guénaël) sell innovative (and often amusing) contemporary Breton art.



## Information

**Cyber Athalie** (4 rue Porte Poterne; per hr €3.50; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 2-7pm Mon-Sat) Internet access.

**Post office** (2 place de la République)

**Tourist office** (02 85 25 13 56 10; [www.tourisme-vannes.com](http://www.tourisme-vannes.com); Quai de Tabarly;

☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Mon-Sat) In a smart modern building on the newly developed marina.



## Getting There & Away

**BUS** The small bus station is opposite the train station. Services include **Keolis Atlantique** ([www.keolis-atlantique.com](http://www.keolis-atlantique.com)), which runs to Carnac (€7.50, 1¼ hours) and on to Quiberon (€10, a further 45 minutes).

**CAR** Agencies have offices at the train station:

**ADA** (02 97 42 59 10)

**Avis** (02 97 47 54 54)

**Europcar** (02 97 42 43 43)

**TRAIN** Frequent trains:

**Auray** €3.70, 11 minutes

**Nantes** €22, 1½ hours

**Quimper** €18, 1½ hours

**Rennes** €19, 1½ hours



## Getting Around

**BICYCLE** You can easily use Vannes' Vélib system **Veloce** ([www.veloce.fr](http://www.veloce.fr), in French), which has 16 year-round stations in the city, with more open in the summer months.

**BUS TPV** ([www.tpv.fr](http://www.tpv.fr); tickets €1.30) runs eight city bus lines until 8.15pm. Its Infobus kiosk is on place de la République. Buses 3 and 4 link the train station with place de la République.

**TAXI** Call ☎02 97 54 34 34.

## EASTERN & CENTRAL BRITTANY

The one-time frontier between Brittany and France, fertile eastern Brittany fans out around the region's lively capital, Rennes. Central Brittany conceals the enchanting Forêt de Paimpont, sprinkled with villages and ancient Breton legends.

### Josselin

POP 2600

In the shadow of an enormous, witch's-hat-turreted 14th-century castle that was the long-time seat of the counts of Rohan, the story-book village of Josselin lies on the banks of the River Oust, 43km northeast of Vannes. Today, visitors in their thousands continue to fall under its spell. A beautiful square of 16th-century half-timbered houses, place Notre Dame, is the little town's heart. The castle and the tourist office are south, below rue des Trente, the main through street.



### Sights & Activities

#### Château de Josselin

CHÂTEAU

(☎02 97 22 36 45; [www.chateaujosselin.com](http://www.chateaujosselin.com); adult/child €7.50/5; ☼2-5.30pm Apr-Sep) Guarded by its three round towers, the extraordinary town château is an incredible sight that remains the home of the Rohan family today. As such, it can only be visited by guided tour: one English-language tour departs daily from June to September; otherwise you can ask for a leaflet in English. Within the château is the **Musée de Poupées** (Doll Museum; adult/child €6.50/4.60). A combination ticket for both costs €12.50/8.50 per adult/child.

#### Basilique Notre Dame du Roncier CHURCH

Parts of the Basilique Notre Dame du Roncier in place Notre Dame date from the 12th century; superb 15th- and 16th-century stained glass illuminates the south aisle.



### Festivals & Events

#### Medieval Festival

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

The hulking Château de Josselin makes an evocative backdrop for the village's

two-day Medieval Festival featuring feasting and fireworks, held in mid-July in even-numbered years.



### Sleeping & Eating Hôtel-Restaurant du Château

TRADITIONAL HOTEL €

(☎02 97 22 20 11; [www.hotel-chateau.com](http://www.hotel-chateau.com), in French; 1 rue Général de Gaulle; d €69-75; ☎) This fantastically located hotel is the best choice in town; it's well worth paying the few extra euros for a magnificent view of the château across the Oust River. Its restaurant *menus* range from €10 to €37 and regional specialities abound – bag a table on the delightful terrace overlooking the river and the château if the weather is good.

#### Camping du Bas de la Lande CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 97 22 22 20; [campingbasdelalande@wanadoo.fr](mailto:campingbasdelalande@wanadoo.fr); Guégon; sites €6; ☼Apr-Oct) This peaceful spot is 2km west of Josselin, on the south bank of the Oust.

#### La Table d'O

MODERN FRENCH €

(☎02 97 70 61 39; 9 rue Glatinier; menus €13-46; ☼lunch & dinner Mon & Thu-Sat, lunch Tue) This pleasant family-run place offers an interesting and varied menu of local cooking with a sprinkle of fusion on top, and has become a local favourite. The sweeping views of the town and valley from the terrace are fantastic for a summer lunch. It's a short walk beyond the château.



### Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 97 22 36 43; [www.paysdejosselin-tourisme.com](http://www.paysdejosselin-tourisme.com); 4 rue Beaumanoir; ☼10am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun) Located beside the castle entrance. You can use the internet here (up to 15 minutes) for free.



### Getting There & Away

**Viaoo** ([www.viaoo29.fr](http://www.viaoo29.fr)) runs several daily buses to Rennes (€13, 1½ hours).

## Forêt de Paimpont

Also known as Brocéliande, the **Paimpont Forest** is about 40km southwest of Rennes, and legendary as the place where King Arthur received the Excalibur sword (forget that these stories are thought to have been brought to Brittany by Celtic settlers and hence probably took place offshore – it's a magical setting all the same).

The best base for exploring the forest is the lakeside village of **Paimpont**. Some 95% of the forest is private land, but the **tourist office** (☎02 99 07 84 23; [www.tourisme-broceliande.com](http://www.tourisme-broceliande.com); ☀10am-noon & 2-6pm, closed Mon Oct-Mar), beside the 12th-century **Église Abbatiale** (Abbey Church), has a free brochure outlining a 62km-long driving circuit with numerous short walks along the way that are accessible to the public. It also sells more-detailed walking and cycling guides.

In July and August the tourist office leads **guided tours** (morning/afternoon/full day €6/10/12) of the forest (the availability of English-speaking guides varies).

Campers can set up their tents at the lakeside **Camping Municipal de Paimpont** (☎02 99 07 89 16; [www.camping-paimpont-broceliande.com](http://www.camping-paimpont-broceliande.com); rue du Chevalier Lancelot du Lac; camping €6; ☀May-Sep), while backpackers will want to head to the **Auberge de Jeunesse** (☎02 97 22 76 75; [www.fuaj.org](http://www.fuaj.org); dm €11.50; ☀Jun-Sep), in a lovely old stone farmhouse at Choucan-en-Brocéliande, 5km north of Paimpont.

For more creature comforts, try the **Hôtel Le Relais de Brocéliande** (☎02 99 07 84 94; [www.le-relais-de-broceliande.fr](http://www.le-relais-de-broceliande.fr); 5 rue du Forges, Paimpont; r €69-98; 🍷), with rustic rooms and canopied beds. Its on-site restaurant (*menus* €15 to €36) specialises in local river-caught fish. **Illenoo** ([www.illenoo.fr](http://www.illenoo.fr), in French) runs buses to/from Rennes (€3.20, one hour) from Monday to Saturday.

You can rent mountain bikes from **Pays de Merlin** (☎02 99 07 80 23; rue Général de Gaulle; per half-/full day €9/12).

## Rennes

POP 213,100

A crossroads since Roman times, Brittany's vibrant capital sits at the junction of highways linking northwestern France's major cities. It's a beautifully set-out city, with an elaborate and stately centre and a charming old town that's a joy to get lost in. At night, this student city has no end of lively places to pop in for a pint and its restaurants are also superb.



### Sights & Activities

#### Cathédrale St-Pierre

CATHEDRAL

(☀9.30am-noon & 3-6pm) Crowning the old city is the 17th-century cathedral, which has an impressive, if rather dark, neoclassical interior. Much of the surrounding old

town was gutted by the great fire of 1720, started by a drunken carpenter who accidentally set alight a pile of shavings. Half-timbered houses that survived line the old city's cobbled streets such as nearby rue St-Michel and rue St-Georges.

#### Palais du Parlement de Bretagne

LAW COURTS

(place du Parlement de Bretagne) This 17th-century former seat of the rebellious Breton parliament has in more recent times been home to the Palais de Justice. In 1994 this building, too, was destroyed by fire, started by demonstrating fishermen. Now restored, it houses the Court of Appeal. In July and August, guided tours in English (adult/child €7/4; book at the tourist office) take you through the ostentatiously gilded rooms.

#### Musée des Beaux-Arts

ART MUSEUM

(☎02 23 62 17 45; 20 quai Émile Zola; adult/child €6/free; ☀10am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Sun) Rooms devoted to the Pont-Aven school (see p263) are the highlight of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, which also has a 'curiosity gallery' of antiques and illustrations amassed in the 18th century. It also hosts temporary exhibitions, which attract an additional charge.

#### Champs Libres

CULTURAL CENTRE

(☎02 23 40 66 00; [www.leschampslibres.fr](http://www.leschampslibres.fr); 10 cours des Alliés) Rennes' futuristic cultural centre is home to the **Musée de Bretagne** (☎02 23 40 66 00; [www.musee-bretagne.fr](http://www.musee-bretagne.fr)), with displays on Breton history and culture. Under the same roof is **Espace des Sciences** (☎02 23 40 66 40; [www.espace-sciences.org](http://www.espace-sciences.org)), an interactive science museum, along with a planetarium, a temporary exhibition space and a library. A combined ticket for all sections costs €7/5 per adult/child.



### Tours

#### urbaVag

BOAT TRIPS

(☎02 99 33 16 88; [www.urbavag.fr](http://www.urbavag.fr), in French; rue Canal St-Martin; per hr €27-32) Cruise Rennes' waterways on a whisper-quiet electric boat rented from urbaVag. Boats take up to seven passengers; the price drops significantly with each extra hour of rental.



### Festivals & Events

#### Les Mercredis du Thabor

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Traditional Breton dancing and music take place in Rennes' beautiful Parc du Thabor on Wednesdays during June and July (usually from 4pm).

## Tombées de la Nuit

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Rennes' old city comes alive during this music and theatre festival in the first week of July.

## Yaouank

NIGHT FESTIVAL

(☎02 99 30 06 87) A huge *fest-noz* of singing, dancing and music played on traditional instruments. Held on the third Saturday in November.



## Sleeping

### Angelina Hôtel

HOTEL €

(☎02 99 79 29 66; www.angelina-hotel.com; 1 quai Lamennais; d €58-65; 🍷) It doesn't get more central than this cavernous hotel right next to République, with the old city and shopping district on the doorstep. Reception's on the 3rd floor of this creaking old building (there's a lift), but the wicker-furnished rooms are surprisingly well kept and come with bright modern bathrooms. Book ahead for the two large double corner rooms – possibly the best deal in town.

### Hôtel de Nemours

BOUTIQUE HOTEL €

(☎02 99 78 26 26; www.hotelnemours.com; 5 rue de Nemours; r €59-92; 🍷🍷) Lined with historic black-and-white photographs of Rennes, sumptuous Hôtel de Nemours is an understatement in elegance, with cream, chocolate and caramel furnishings, high thread-count white linens, flat-screen TVs and free wi-fi. Slide into a corduroy-upholstered banquette for a breakfast buffet feast (€8.50).

### Hôtel des Lices

HOTEL €

(☎02 99 79 14 81; www.hotel-des-lices.com; 7 place des Lices; r €67-83; 🍷🍷) You can peer down from the steel balconies or through the floor-to-ceiling glass doors to see the Saturday-morning market, which snakes right past the front door of this modern six-storey hotel. Inside, rooms are small but sleek with pared-down contemporary furnishings and textured walls. Breakfast (€8) is served in a sunlit ground-floor salon with limed floorboards, white tables and fresh flowers.

### Auberge de Jeunesse

HOSTEL €

(☎02 99 33 22 33; www.fuaj.org; 10-12 Canal St-Martin; dm incl breakfast €19; ☀7am-1am) Rennes' well-equipped youth hostel has a self-catering kitchen and a canalside setting 2km north from the centre. Take bus 18 from place de la Mairie.

## Vénézia Hôtel

HOTEL €

(☎02 99 30 36 56; 27 rue Dupont des Loges; s €30-42, d €40-48) Named for the Venice-like canals surrounding this small 'island' in the city centre, half of this hotel's 16 rose-toned rooms have pretty views over the canalside garden. The cheapest have a toilet, but share showers. It's something of a Fawcety Towers experience, but the friendliness of the staff wins you over in the end.

## Camping des Gayeulles

CAMPGROUND €

(☎02 99 36 91 22; www.camping-rennes.com; rue Professeur Audin; per adult/campervan/tent €3.50/7.20/5.70) Rennes' only campground is in Parc des Bois, 4.5km northeast of the train station. It's open for campervans year-round. Take bus 3 from place de la République to the Gayeulles stop.



## Eating

Rennes has a wide choice of restaurants. Rues St-Malo and St-Georges are the city's two main 'eat streets'; the latter particularly specialises in crêperies.

### Léon le Cochon

PORK RESTAURANT €

(☎02 99 79 37 54; 1 rue Maréchal Joffre; menu €25, mains €13-24) Basking in the plaudits of almost every French gastronomic guidebook, but still fun and informal, 'Leon the Pig' specialises not just in pork but porcine products in all their many and varied manifestations.

### Café Babylone

MODERN FRENCH €

(☎02 99 85 82 99; 12 rue des Dames; mains €7-18; ☺closed dinner Mon) Despite being virtually built into the walls of Rennes' cathedral, this charming contemporary yet traditional place is a surprisingly tourist-free zone, favoured instead by locals enjoying a plate of oysters or one of the finely produced dishes of rich home cooking on the terrace.

### L'Épicerie

CAFÉ €

(☎02 99 38 76 70; 2 rue des Fossés; tartines €4-7; ☺noon-midnight) This fantastic old-town eatery is riotously popular with a studenty crowd who pile in to enjoy the generous *tartines* (open sandwiches) and flasks of beer on the buzzing terrace outside.

### Le Café Breton

TRADITIONAL FRENCH €

(☎02 99 30 74 95; 14 rue Nantaise; menus €8-18; ☺closed dinner Mon) Diminutive rue Nantaise has a handful of top restaurants, including this local fave for its tarts, salads and gratins. Definitely book ahead in the evenings.





### Le Kerlouan

CRÊPERIE €

(☎02 99 36 83 02; 17 rue St-Georges; crêpes €2-9.90) This small place manages to punch above its weight with a fantastic selection of imaginative crêpe taste combinations. Service is friendly and fast, and the terrace is always full.

### Self-catering

Fresh produce and Breton specialties are available daily at Rennes' covered markets, **Les Halles Centrales** (place Honoré Commeurec; ☎7am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun). The fabulous **Marché des Lices** (place des Lices, ☎9am-6pm Sat) sees more than 300

producers converge on Rennes to sell an extraordinary array of fresh produce.

Pick up exquisite pastries and still-warm bread at **Boulangerie Hoche** (☎02 99 63 61 01; 17 rue Hoche, ☎7am-7.30pm Mon-Sat).



### Drinking

Rue St-Michel – nicknamed rue de la Soif (Street of Thirst) for its bars, pubs and cafés – is the best-known drinking strip, but it can get rowdy late at night.

### Le Nabuchodonosor

WINE BAR

(12 rue Hoche) The favoured haunt of arty and intellectual types in Rennes, this

## Rennes

### 📍 Top Sights

Cathédrale St-Pierre.....A3

### 📍 Sights

- 1 Musée des Beaux Arts .....D4  
2 Palais du Parlement de Bretagne.....C2

### 🛏 Sleeping

- 3 Angelina Hôtel.....C4  
4 Hôtel de Nemours .....C4  
5 Hôtel des Lices .....B2

### 🍴 Eating

- 6 Boulangerie Hoche.....D1  
7 Café Babylone.....A3  
8 L'Épicerie .....D2  
9 La Ville d'Ys .....D2  
10 Le Café Breton.....A3  
11 Le Kerlouan .....D2  
12 Léon le Cochon .....D4  
13 Les Halles Centrales.....C5  
14 Marché des Lices.....A2

### 🍷 Drinking

- 15 La Cité d'Ys .....D4  
16 Le Nabuchodonosor.....D2  
17 Oan's Pub .....A3

charming wine bar is a great place for an evening drink in buzzing surroundings.

### Oan's Pub

PUB

(1 rue Georges Dottin; ☺2pm-1am Mon-Sat) Locals habitually turn up with instruments for impromptu Celtic jam sessions at this cosy cave-like, stone-walled pub with Brittany-brewed Coreff beer on tap.

### La Cité d'Ys

PUB

(31 rue Vasselot; ☺noon-1am) If you want to practise your Breton with Breton-speaking locals and bar staff (lubricated by Breton beer), this wooden mezzanine pub is prime. *Yec'hed mat!* (Cheers!)



## Entertainment

To find out about upcoming football matches and obtain tickets, check [www.staderennais.com](http://www.staderennais.com) (in French).

### Cinéma Arvor

CINEMA

(☺02 99 38 72 40; 29 rue d'Antrain) Screens nondubbed films.



## Information

**NeuroGame** ([www.neurogame.com](http://www.neurogame.com); 2 rue Dinan; per 20min €1; ☺10am-midnight Tue-Fri,

noon-midnight Mon & Sat, 2-10pm Sun) Internet access.

**Peanuts** (11 av Janvier; ☺11.30am-6.30pm) Bar offering free wireless.

**Post office** (place de la République)

**Tourist office** (☺02 99 67 11 11; [www.tourisme-rennes.com](http://www.tourisme-rennes.com); 11 rue St-Yves; ☺9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 11am-1pm & 2-6pm Sun) Offers an audioguide to the city taking you on a walking tour of eight sights for €4.50. Staff can book accommodation for free.

## Getting There & Away

**BUS** Among Rennes' many bus services, **Illeenoo** (☺08 10 35 10 35; [www.illeenoo.fr](http://www.illeenoo.fr), in French) runs regular daily services:

**Dinan** €3.90, 1½ hours

**Dinard** €3.90, two hours

**Mont St-Michel** €11, 80 minutes

**Paimpont** €3.20, one hour

**CAR** Agencies have offices at the train station:

**Avis** (☺02 23 42 14 14)

**Budget** (☺09 64 48 17 96)

**Europcar** (☺02 23 44 02 72)

**Hertz** (☺02 23 42 17 01)

**National/Citer** (☺02 23 44 02 78)

**TRAIN** Destinations with frequent services:

**Brest** €32, two hours

**Dinan** €13.50, one hour including a change

**Nantes** €23, 1¼ hours

**Paris Montparnasse** €48, 2¼ hours

**Quimper** €32, 2½ hours

**St-Malo** €13, one hour

**Vannes** €19, 1½ hours

## Getting Around

**BUS** Rennes has an efficient local bus network run by **STAR** (☺08 11 55 55 35; [www.star.fr](http://www.star.fr), in French; 12 rue Pré Botté). Bus tickets (single journey €1.20, 10-trip carnet €11, 24-hour pass €3.50) are interchangeable with the metro.

**METRO** Incredibly for a city its size, Rennes has its own single-line metro system, also run by STAR. The metro line runs northwest to south-east. Main stations include République (place de la République) in the centre, and Ste-Anne (old town).

**TAXI** Call ☺02 99 30 79 79.

## Vitré

POP 17,300

With its narrow cobbled streets, half-timbered houses and colossal castle topped by witch's-hat turrets, Vitré rivals Dinan as

## BRETON CRÊPES

Crêpes are Brittany's traditional staple, and ubiquitous throughout the region. Unlike the rolled-up crêpes sold at stalls on Paris' street corners, Breton crêpes are folded envelope-style at the edges, served flat on a plate and eaten using cutlery.

Rennes, as Brittany's capital, has dozens of enticing crêperies, including **La Ville d'Ys** (☎02 99 36 70 28; 5 rue St-Georges; crêpes €2.20-8.40), probably the town's most famous crêperie, named for the fabled Atlantis-style submerged city of Breton legend. Tucked inside a two-storey 15th-century house with a slanted wooden staircase and colourful crockery displayed on the walls, La Ville d'Ys serves up mouth-watering black wheat pancakes with sublime taste combinations.

We spoke to the crêperie's owner-chef, Claudine Thomas, as she cooked in her open kitchen, to find out the secrets behind making Breton crêpes:

### What are the essential ingredients in a basic galette?

*Blé noir* (buckwheat flour) – *sarrasin* in Breton – and salted Breton butter. It's important to keep the Breton tradition; locals take crêpes very seriously. Well, crêpes are crêpes!

### What are your favourite traditional toppings?

*Andouille* (local sausage) and for sweet crêpes, *caramel au beurre salé* (salty caramel sauce) – *salidou* in Breton – which I make here with ingredients from the market.

### What's the ideal cooking temperature?

A *galettier* (the hotplate) – *bilig* in Breton – has no temperature dial, only numbers from one to eight. It can't be too hot – the crêpe needs to be brown at the edges; crispy but not burnt.

### Do you use a particular recipe?

I use a recipe from Finistère – the crêpes are a finer texture and crispier than other recipes. People always come in because of this recipe; they don't want any other kind. If you want to learn how to create your own crêpes, the **Écoles de Treblec** (☎02 99 34 86 76; [www.ecole-maitre-crepier.com](http://www.ecole-maitre-crepier.com), in French with English sections; 66 rue de Guer, Maure-de-Bretagne), 38km southwest of Rennes, runs a variety of courses and classes.

one of Brittany's best-preserved medieval towns – with far fewer tourists and a more laissez-faire village air.

## Sights & Activities

### Musée du Château

CASTLE MUSEUM

(☎02 99 75 04 54; place du Château; adult/child €4/2.50; ☀10am-6pm) Rising on a rocky outcrop overlooking the River Vilaine, Vitré's medieval castle was built in 1060, and was expanded in the 14th and 15th centuries. A twin-turreted gateway leads you from the cobbled square of place du Château into the triangular inner courtyard, while the museum itself is at the château's southern corner.

## Sleeping

Vitré has a shortage of accommodation, so it's worth booking ahead any time of year.

### Hôtel du Château

FAMILY HOTEL €

(☎02 99 74 58 59; [www.hotelduchateau35.fr](http://www.hotelduchateau35.fr); 5 rue Rallon; s €38-55, d €45-60; 🏠) Wake up to the aroma of freshly baked bread and, on upper floors, fantastic vistas of the castle at this family-run hotel at the base of the ramparts. The friendly owners are a fount of local information; there's good wheelchair access, a pleasant courtyard for breakfast and €3 garaged parking.

### Mme Faucher

B&B €

(☎02 99 75 08 69; <http://bnb.faucher.info>; 2 chemin des Tertres Noirs; s/d €44/50; 🏠) In a rambling 18th-century stone house looking out over a large leafy garden, this *chambre d'hôte* run by Mme and M Faucher is the kind of familial, down-to-earth place you hoped still existed in France. Their home is filled with family memorabilia, bathrooms are shared, and travellers are welcomed

with open arms. Breakfast is a hearty basketful of brioches and baguettes, along with strong coffee. It's just a short downhill stroll to the town centre, but driving is a bit complicated due to the one-way road system. Check directions online or ask the tourist office for a route map.



## Eating & Drinking

Quaint crêperies and gastronomic restaurants are tucked away throughout the old town.

### Le Pichet

TRADITIONAL FRENCH €

(☎02 99 75 24 09; 17 bd de Laval; menus €18-50, mains €12-27; ☺lunch Mon-Sat, dinner Mon-Tue, Fri & Sat) Classic French cuisine incorporating local fish and regional produce fresh from the market is served on a charming terrace overlooking the garden when the

sun's shining, and in front of the crackling open fire in winter.

### Le Barabis

MICROBREWERY

(3 rue de la Trémouille; ☺3pm-3am Mon-Sat, to 10pm Sun) Vitre's funky, laid-back microbrewery creates artisan beers in its gleaming copper boilers, which it serves on tap. In summer try the *blanche*, brewed with citrus zest; in winter, go for the robust *noire* (stout).



## Information

**Tourist office** (☎02 99 75 04 46; [www.ot-vitre.fr](http://www.ot-vitre.fr); place Général de Gaulle; ☺9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Tue-Sat, 2.30-6pm Mon) Right outside the train station.



## Getting There & Away

Frequent trains travel between Vitre and Rennes (€7, 35 minutes).

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